

COMIC.

THE FIVE CENT

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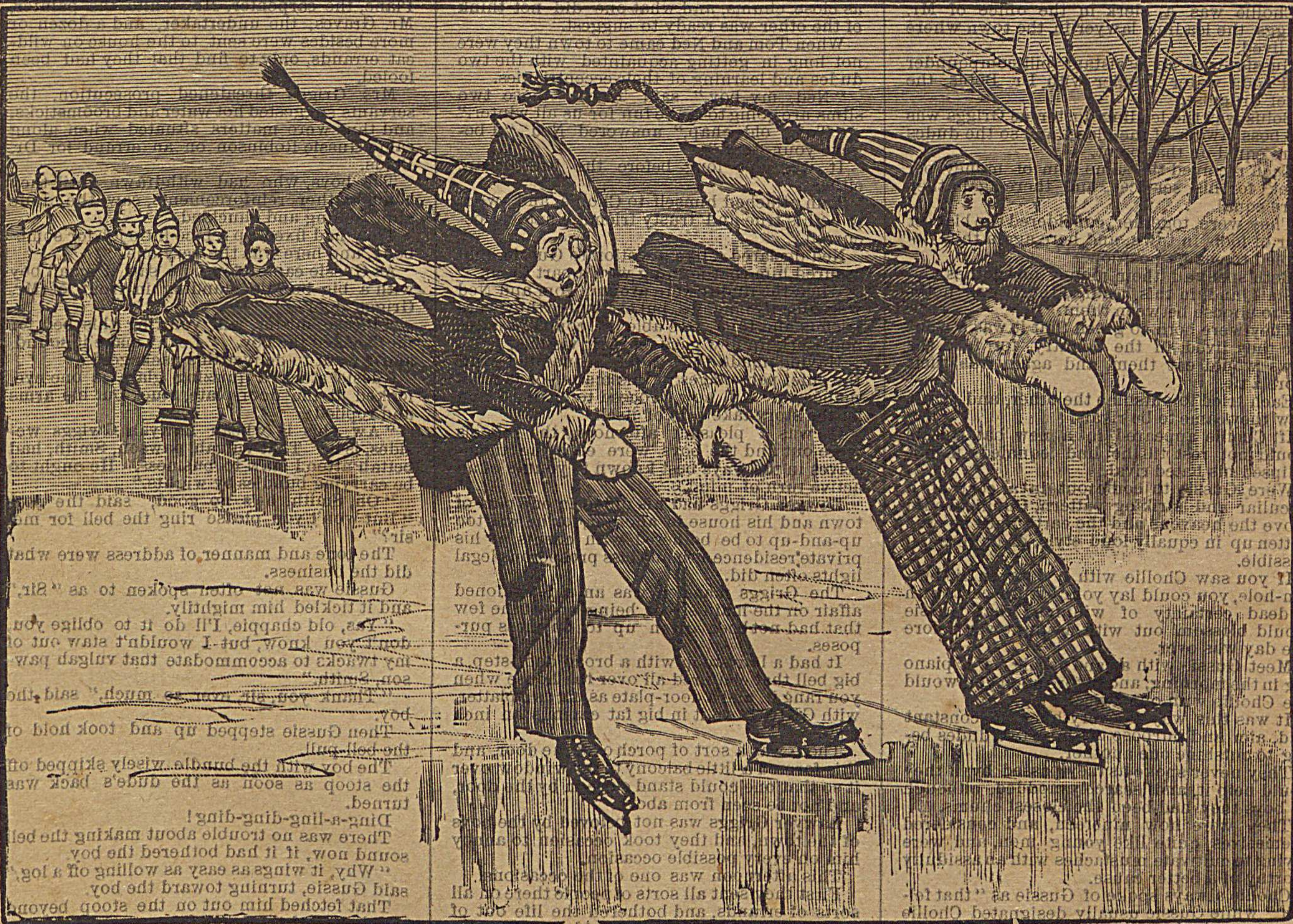
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Vol. II.

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## THE Comical Adventures of Two Dudes.

By TOM TEASER.



Straight for the bank they went, and there was no more stopping them than if they had had wings. The bank was now not more than ten feet away. Tom and Ned and the rest had paused, and were now looking at the dudes.



# THE COMICAL ADVENTURES OF TWO DUDES.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "Muldoon the Fireman," "Muldoon's Night School," "Mike McGuinness; or, Traveling For Pleasure," "Muldoon's Vacation," "Muldoon the Sport," "Judge Cleary's Country Court," "Hildebrandt Fitzgum," etc., etc., etc.

## PART I.

**C**HOLLIE SMITH and Gussie Robinson were rivals. They were both dudes and neither had any more brains than a canary bird.

Chollie was a clerk in the office of Mr. Griggs, the leading lawyer in the town where he lived.

Gussie was an assistant pill-compounder and soda water juggler with Dr. Bolus, the chief druggist.

Bolus was the leading doctor as Griggs was the boss lawyer of the place, and so the dudes were equal on that point.

Each received the same sum of money per week for his services, and there again they were equal.

They were, together, considered the biggest pair of fools in town, and here again they occupied the same position.

Both spent all their money on clothes and fal-lals, and, in this regard, there was nothing to choose between them.

They were both so green that it was a wonder they lived in the country, for fear the cows would eat them, and again was their score a tie.

Each tried to outshine the other, and that's how they came to be rivals.

If Chollie appeared in a new hat, Gussie would not rest till he had equaled, if not eclipsed his hated rival.

Were Gussie to come out in a coat of a peculiar and striking pattern, Chollie would move the heavens and the earth until he was gotten up in equally loud style, or more so, if possible.

If you saw Chollie with a daisy in his button-hole, you could lay your bottom cent, with a dead certainty of winning, that Gussie would blossom out with a sunflower before the day was over.

Meet Gussie with a cane as big as a piano leg in the morning, and before noon you would see Chollie with one twice as big.

It was this way in everything, the constant end, aim and purpose of those two dudes being to outshine one another.

They never spoke as they passed by, if they could help it, and scarcely nodded, although as boys they had been the closest chums.

They were now nineteen, and considered themselves quite like young men, and were trying to cultivate mustaches with an assiduity worthy of a better cause.

Chollie always spoke of Gussie as "that fellah," while Gussie usually designated Chollie as "that vulgah pawson," and so the feud went on.

There was in Hunterdon, the town where the two dudes lived, an academy for young gentlemen, and to this most of the town boys went, there being a number of attendants from a distance as well.

There was also a seminary for young la-

dies, and consequently, during school terms, there were lots of young people of both sexes in town, and the pursuit of fun, as well as of learning, was very vigorous.

Tom Trust and Ned New were boarders in the town and pupils at the academy, as well as close chums, and what one did not think of the other was ready to suggest.

When Tom and Ned came to town they were not long in getting acquainted with the two dudes and learning of their eccentricities.

"Ned, my boy," said Tom, "those two slims are going to make fun for us all winter."

"Tom, old chap," answered Ned, "I believe your story."

It was not long before the fun began, either.

Tom attached himself to Chollie, and swore to be his true and trusty friend, whatever occurred.

Ned declared a like devotion to Gussie, and assured him that nothing would part them.

When the dudes were around Tom and Ned were deadly enemies, but elsewhere they were friends and thus were able to compare notes and work up new gags on their victims.

Having made the reader acquainted with the chief personages in this matter-of-fact romance, we will now proceed to business and let the story take care of itself.

It was a pleasant afternoon, the schools were out and the boys were enjoying themselves in the ways best known to youths of an active turn of mind.

Lawyer Griggs had his office in one part of town and his house in another, for he was too up-and-up to be bothered with clients at his private residence as many less prosperous legal lights often did.

The Griggs mansion was an old-fashioned affair on the main street, being one of the few that had not been given up to business purposes.

It had a low stoop with a broad door-step, a big bell that clattered all over the house when you rang it, and a door-plate as big as a platter, with GRIGGS on it in big fat capitals an inch wide.

There was a sort of porch over the door, and this formed a little balcony to the window over it so that one could stand close in by the door, and not be seen from above.

Lawyer Griggs was not beloved by the boys of the town, and they took occasion to annoy him on every possible occasion.

This afternoon was one of the occasions.

First they sent all sorts of people there on all sorts of errands, and bothered the life out of the servants and all hands besides.

Pompey Snowdrop, the leading whitewash artist in town, was told that the lawyer wanted his entire house whitewashed, inside and out, and was advised to apply for the job at once.

Honora Mulligan, the lady who took in washing on Ragg Alley, was informed that

Mrs. Griggs had bought twelve pairs of elegant lace curtains, and that she would not consent to any one but the Widdy Mulligan doing them up, and that now was the time to apply.

The butcher, the baker, the grocer, Mr. Plane, the carpenter, Mr. White, the painter, Mr. Graves, the undertaker, and a dozen or more besides were sent to the house on wild-cat errands, only to find that they had been fooled.

Mrs. Griggs threatened prosecution, the servants suggested hot water and broomsticks, and thus were matters situated when along came Gussie Robinson on an errand for Dr. Bolus.

The boys, who had withdrawn until they could gather reinforcements, saw the dude approaching and chuckled.

They had fixed up a nice little job for somebody, and here was the very one.

As Gussie came along he saw a small boy with a big bundle standing in front of Mr. Griggs' door.

"Please, mister, will you ring this bell for me?" asked the boy. "I can't make it sound, and I want to deliver this package."

Gussie stuck a quizzing glass in one eye, looked at the door-plate, stuck out his arms and replied:

"Aw, this is wheah Lawyah Gwiggs we-sides, is it? That vulgah pawson, Smith, had bettah attend maw to business. He ought to be carrying bundles by wights."

"Oh, Smith, he's no good," said the boy. "But won't you please ring the bell for me, sir?"

The tone and manner of address were what did the business.

Gussie was not often spoken to as "Sir," and it tickled him mightily.

"Yas, old chappie, I'll do it to oblige you, don't you know, but I wouldn't staw out of my twacks to accommodate that vulgah pawson, Smith."

"Thank you, sir, ever so much," said the boy.

Then Gussie stepped up and took hold of the bell-pull.

The boy with the bundle wisely skipped off the stoop as soon as the dude's back was turned.

Ding-a-ling-ding-ding!

There was no trouble about making the bell sound now, if it had bothered the boy.

"Why, it wings as easy as wolling off a log," said Gussie, turning toward the boy.

That fetched him out on the stoop beyond the shelter of the porch.

The bell had another effect besides that of arousing everybody in the house.

It had started a shower-bath attachment.

Up went a window, and down came a barrel full of water right on Gussie's head.

To say he got wet would be putting it very mild.



He was drenched, saturated, soaked. And that wasn't all of it. When the water stopped coming down the door flew open.

Out came a big Irish girl, like a Jack-in-the-box, and attacked the poor dude in the rear.

She had an overgrown broom in her hand and she knew how to use it.

Whack!

"Take that, ye half baked misfit!"

Crack!

"There's another wan for good luck, ye gorilla's cousin!"

Biff!

"Come here playing thricks an respectable people, will yez?"

Crash!

"It's the masther that'll foind out how ye do be emplyin' yer time, annyin' iverybody in the house whin yez ought to be studyin' the lah!"

Spat!

She was a dandy with the broom and equally good at keeping up the conversation.

She whacked as fast as she talked, and every sentence was punctuated with a blow.

Poor Gussie!

His hat was banged over his eyes, his high collar was a wreck, and his tight coat was split right up the back.

"Go on now bad manners to ye, and I hope Mr. Griggs will give ye another batin' whin he foinds out phwat ye have been up to, ye monkey!"

Then that wrathful Milesian got in a cross-cut with the besom, took Gussie on the bosom of his trousers and swept him off the stoop.

The door closed with a bang, the window was put down, and all was serene once more.

Poor Gussie!

He had been terribly abused.

Worse than all, however, he had been taken for Chollie Smith, his detested rival.

That was adding insult to injury.

He walked sadly away, and presently encountered Ned New.

"What's the matter, Gus?" asked Ned, sympathizingly, "been caught in a shower?"

"No, old chappie, but that howid sawvant, who walks faw Mistah Gwiggs, thwew watah on me and stwuck me with a bwoom."

"Indeed!"

"Yas, old chappie, and she called me that vulgah fellah Smith. Do I look like him, old chappie, tell me now?"

"Of course not, Gus," said Ned, promptly.

"The ideah of my being taken fow that vulgah fellah. Did you evah heah of anybody by the name of Smith amounting to anything, old chappie?"

"Well, there was the original John, you know."

"What did he do?"

"Discovered America, didn't he?"

"Pawhaps he did, but he mawied a squaw aftahwards. Nice fellah he was."

"Well, but think of his finding the country, Gus."

"That's nothing. The countwy was big enough faw anybody to find if they only looked for it. No Smith evah did anything gweat, old chappie."

"Well, I guess John was an exception."

"Pawhaps so, but that was maw than a hundred yeahs ago, and I guess the stock has wun out since. The Smiths of to-day aw nobodies, old chappie."

"Well, I don't belong to that extensive family, so you can say all you like against them."

"Oh, I say, old chappie," cried Gussie, "I've got an ideah!"

"That's worth mentioning, I'm sure."

"Yas, so it is. Do you know that I fawmly believe that my having watah thwown on me and getting bwoomed was all thwough that vulgah pawson, Smith?"

"Shouldn't wonder, Gus."

"I know it was, but I'll pay him up faw it; I'll make him fight me."

"What, a real fight?" cried Ned, keenly appreciating the ridiculousness of the situation.

"Yas, old chappie, a weal fight in a wing, with gloves and best men, and all that, don't you know?"

"Why, they have best men at weddings, Gus, not at prize fights."

"Do they now, old chappie?"

"Of course."

"Well, I'll get even with him, anyhow."

"You ought to, and I'll help."

"Thanks, awfully, old chappie, but I must go home and dwess. I cahn't appeah on the stweet looking like this. Ta-ta, old chappie; see you latah."

Then Gussie skipped away, while Ned went

to find Tom, and think up some good gag to work on Chollie Smith.

The latter got a good blowing up from Griggs the next day for having put his house in an uproar, and was threatened with discharge if he did not mend his ways.

This was the first time Chollie had heard of the little racket.

He was duly astonished, and demanded a bill of particulars.

Griggs gave it to him, and then the budding Blackstone proved an *alibi* and cleared himself.

"Well," said Griggs, explosively, "I'm glad that it wasn't you, for I never could get damages, and it wouldn't do any good to fire you out, that I know."

"It must be that fellah Wobinson," declared Chollie. "He twies to dwess like me, but he hasn't got my style."

"H'm! That's no better," muttered Griggs. "I can't sue him either. He has less money than brains, and that's needless."

"I'll bet it was that fellah Wobinson," mused Cholly to himself, as he was dusting off the lawyer's books; "and that he did it just to get me in twouble. I wish Bwidget had bwoken his head."

"No, I don't," he presently declared, "faw then I wouldn't have the pleashah of doing it myself, baw Jove."

At noon he met Tom Trust, who said with a great show of interest:

"Heard that you came near getting into trouble, Chollie, on account of Robinson."

"Yas, deah boy, that fellah is a wegulah nuisance; most lost me my place, deah boy!"

"You want to get hunk on him."

"So I will, deah boy, but how am I going to do it? I cahn't fight him, ye know. That would be too awfully low."

"No, but you can use your wits against his."

"Aw, deah boy, I don't believe he's got any. I don't weally."

"I tell you what. Go into the store and make him wait on you. That will humiliate him."

"I'll do it, deah boy, baw Jove, I will. Vewy bwiliant idea, that."

"Well, let's go in there now. He does not go away till one o'clock."

"I will, baw Jove," and off started Tom and the dude for the drug store.

Old Bones wasn't able to make money enough to live on by his practice alone, and he therefore kept a drug shop and sold fancy articles.

Gussie was behind the counter and was quite alone in the shop when Tom and Chollie entered.

"Give me a glass of soda watah, fellah," said Chollie, pulling off one dizzy yellow kid glove which he had drawn on just before coming in.

He wanted to impress Gussie with his style, and was only sorry that no one else was around.

Gussie colored to the roots of his yellow bangs, and turning to Tom, said, with a weak smile:

"Can I do anything faw you, sah? You came in ahead of that pawson, I believe."

"Oh, no, I came with him."

"Glass of soda, fellah," said Chollie. "Coffee, with plenty of cweam. What'll you take, Tom, deah boy?"

"Seltzer and milk," answered Tom, gazing absently around.

"Hurry up, fellah," said Chollie. "Do you think we can wait all day? What aw you hired faw?"

"If that vulgah pawson was alone I should be tempted to poison his soda, 'pon me wawd I would," muttered Gussie under his breath.

Then he drew the coffee soda for Chollie, putting in as little cream as possible, and after that fixed up Tom's dose.

"Fifteen cents, boy," he said to Chollie, as the latter was about to pick up his glass. "We don't twust in this shop."

It was Chollie's turn to color up now, and Tom grinned.

"It's only ten cents, fellah."

"Soda with cweam is ten cents, and the seltzer is five maw."

Poor Chollie blushed again, for he had but ten cents in his clothes.

Instead of shaming his rival it looked as though he would be the one humiliated.

Tom chucked down the change with a grin, and Chollie remarked:

"Oh, yas, it is yaw tweat, isn't it? I had fawgot, weally. You didn't put any cweam at all in this, fellah!" turning to Gussie.

"It isn't good to give calves too much

cweam," replied the other, with an elevation of his nose.

"If I thought that low fellah meant me I'd wepawt him," said Chollie to Tom.

"A vulgah pawson that hasn't enough money to pay faw his tweat cahn't wepawt anybody, I fahncy," retorted Gussie.

Chollie nearly choked over his glass.

"Yaw a liar, sah!" he cried, "a wegular liar, and I shall tell yaw employer when—"

He did not get any further that time.

Gussie had stood all the cheeking he intended to.

He grabbed up the seltzer bottle, opened the valve, and let his abhorred rival have it, right in the neck.

Chollie set his glass down so quick that it nearly jumped out of its nickle-plated frame.

Then he got a half pint of seltzer water in his ear and concluded that it was time to leave.

"Don't you daiah call me a liah again, you vulgah pawson," cried Gussie, setting down the bottle.

Chollie turned around when he reached the door, shook his fist and retorted:

"I'll have you flahed out, see if I don't, fellah! I'll sue you faw assault too, baw Jove I will."

Gussie had nothing to say for he was as much afraid as his rival and felt his courage oozing out at his finger ends now that the crisis had passed.

"That pays up for the watah that was thwown on me yestahday," he observed, when the dude and Tom had gone out. "I wish I had given him maw of it."

"That howid fellah got the best of me aftah all," wailed Chollie, when he and Tom were outside. "I shall nevah fawgive myself for not pawalizing him with a glawnce."

"Yes, it's too bad," said Tom, who was dying to laugh, "ut we may have better luck next time."

"Yas, deah boy; but now I must wun off to dinnah. I shall have to dwess fawst, ye know, for my collah is just like a wag."

"All right, Chollie; see you again."

As the dude was crossing the street on his way to his boarding house, a sprinkling-cart passed just ahead of him.

The driver let off steam as he struck the crossing, but as it happened a few drops fell on Chollie's highly polished boots.

That made him mad, and he shouted at the man on the cart:

"Say theah, you fellah, cahn't ye look out? You spatthahed me all ovah."

"What's that?" asked the man, looking back and stopping his team.

"You'd bettah be caiahful next time, and not spatthah a fellah. It's a wegulah baw."

"Ah, I didn't hurt you."

"Yes, you did, and yaw a weal wude fellah. You ought not to be allowed to dwive."

"Oh, go take a walk," muttered the man.

"No, sir, I shall not take a walk, and I will have you wepawted for a low, vulgah—"

The driver had taken all the gas from that dude that he meant to.

He suddenly hoisted up his lever as far as it would go, at the same time backing his team.

Such a drenching as Chollie Smith got then! The water gushed out from a hundred apertures and fell in a shower all over him.

Talk about Gussie Robinson's bath!

That was nothing to the wetting down which Chollie got.

It was a wonder that the flood did not sweep him away.

"Oh, baw Jove! Stop that!" he howled, jumping out of the way.

Then the man whipped up his horses, and went on down the street, laying the dust as he went along.

Poor Chollie felt like a drowned rat, and most devoutly wished that he was at home.

The worst of it was that the detested Gussie Robinson had come to the door of the drug shop at that moment and had seen the whole business.

Chollie heard him laugh, and felt more than ever like killing the fellow.

That was not all, though.

A lot of the seminary girls had just started to cross from the other side, and they were witnesses of his mishap.

How girls will laugh when anything funny strikes them!

They cackled like a lot of hens, and every cackle went to that dude's heart like a stab.

He knew that his particular dear was in that crowd of girls and had seen his misadventure.



That she should see him thus was torture to the poor dude.

He wished himself in Africa, New Jersey, or any other out-of-the-way place.

He could not run, for that would be undignified, and so he had to face half a seminary of girls, looking at his very worst.

"Oh, girls, do look at Mr. Smith!" shrieked one giggly creature of fourteen who aped the manners of a young lady of twenty, "doesn't he look just too awfully funny for anything, now?"

Then all those bread-and-butter girls giggled and stared at poor Chollie as he stood waiting for them to pass.

When his own girl laughed with the rest, his cup of misery was full.

"Yaw all a set of howid old things, so there!" he broke out, as he dashed ahead, not caring whom he jostled.

There were more girls coming, and unless he wanted to run the gantlet of the whole gang he would have to get out of that at once.

Consequently he made one grand rush, reached the other side, and dashed in between two buildings.

One of these was the freight house of the railroad station of Hunterdon, and Chollie saved considerable distance by going this way.

He lived on the other side of the railroad, and, when he was not on the mash, usually took this short cut.

When he reached the track he found that a freight train stood right in his way, extending in either direction for a considerable space.

"Oh, deah, what a baw!" he remarked. "I do hate to cwawl undah the cahs. It's so undignified, baw Jove!"

The car just in front of him, as he presently discovered, was empty, and both side doors were open.

All he would have to do was to step from the platform to the car, skip through and jump off on the other side.

It looked easy enough, certainly.

Chollie skipped in, and had gone half way across, when there came a sudden bump.

His troubles were not over yet, it seemed.

The train was beginning to move, and that bump was the result thereof.

It was not any of your gentle little bumps, either, but more like a collision.

The cars came together with a bang, and poor Chollie Smith, not expecting the shock, was knocked clean off his feet.

Now that box car had contained meal in bags, and was not yet entirely empty, as the dude had supposed.

A pile of meal sacks lay not far away, and it was very lucky that they did, in one respect, at all events.

When the sudden starting up of the freight train threw Chollie down, he fell slap on top of that pile of bags.

Then he rolled over to the floor of the car unhurt.

The bags had saved him, but they had done something else.

Rolls are made of flour, usually, and some people make a meal of them, but Chollie's roll covered him with meal, and he looked like a floury ghost.

His wet clothes, and the meal bags combined, made a ghost of him in about ten seconds.

The roll had caused him to be done on both sides, and the rear view was as white as the front.

When Chollie Smith got up and looked at himself, he was ready to cry.

The white would not shake off any more than a donkey can change the color of his hide.

The poor dude's dizzy suit was covered with a paste that resisted all his attempts to remove.

"Oh, deah! my suit is just wuined!" he wailed.

That wasn't all, though.

Another shake and another fall made him aware that the train was now going at full speed, and that it was too late to jump out.

A glance out at the door showed him houses and fences gliding rapidly by, and pretty soon the town would be left behind.

The next stop was five miles further down the road.

Five miles from home and not a cent in his pocket.

Poor Chollie Smith!

## PART II.

**C**HOLLIE SMITH, as he was being hurried away on that freight train at the rate of twenty miles an hour, felt anything but cheerful.

In the first place he had no money to get back to Hunterdon with.

He would be obliged to foot it, and that would make him late in getting to the office, and he would receive a laying out.

There was something worse than that, however.

He would have to appear among strangers in soiled clothes!

The very thought of it took all the kink out of his crimps.

How they would look at him if they ever met him again.

It would never do at all!

Just then there came another bump and the wretched dude was bounced down upon those bags again.

The train had come to a stop once more.

It had merely run off upon a side track to let a passenger train pass.

Chollie drew a long breath of relief, when he realized this.

It did not take him long to jump from the car to the road after that.

Luck followed him again.

He jumped anywhere, without stopping to look.

Consequently he tumbled into a muddy ditch at the side of the track and got another coating on his clothes.

Mud and meal and water made a combination fit for a pig, and poor Chollie's heart was bursted when he got up and looked at himself.

"It's all the fault of that fellah Wobinson," he muttered. "I'll get old Gwiggs to sue him for me. I ought to get a suit of clothes out of it anyhow."

Then he started for home once more, keeping to the back streets as long as he could, and stealing in at the rear door so as not to be seen.

Somebody saw him going up the back stairs, however, and immediately yelled out:

"Oh, Mrs. Baker, there's a tramp just went up the back stairs. Get a gun, somebody."

"Bring the dog in; he'll fix any tramp you ever saw."

"Shut all the doors! He might shoot!"

"Here, Rover, sick him!"

Chollie heard the hullabaloo, but did not know what it meant, and hurried along so as not to be discovered.

Then all the boarders, the landlady and the dog flew after him, some up the front stairs and some at the back.

"Oh, deah! they must never see me looking like this," and the dude dashed into his room and slammed the door.

The crowd was right after him, however, and one of the boarders, a big fellow weighing nearly two hundred pounds, bounced in after him.

"Here he is, I've got him!" he yelled, grabbing Chollie Smith by the neck and pounding his head against the wall.

"Stop! stop! it's me—Chollie Smith!" cried the dude.

"Why, so it is," gasped Mrs. Baker. "Where have you been? How did you get so wet?"

"What have you been doing?"

She might have gone on in her volcanic way chucking in emphatic words where they were least expected, but just then all the boarders burst into a roar of laughter and cut her off.

"Go away and let me dweess," said Chollie.

"Seems to me you folks make an awful fuss if a fellah gets a little wet."

"A little! Why, you look as if you had been drowned!"

"Well, I only just fell into the ditch, as I was cwossing the wallowd track."

"Well!" screamed Mrs. Baker. "If you think you're going to throw those wet rags on my carpet, you're mistaken. Go out in the wood-shed if you want to change."

"Yes'm," said Chollie, mildly.

He was in arrears for his board and feared that if he gave the lady any back talk, she would replevin his stock of striped socks and silk scarfs, in order to realize the amount of her bill.

Poor Chollie was obliged to adjourn to the wood-shed forthwith, while the heavy boarder brought him a clean suit to put on.

This was rough on Chollie, but he had to submit to it, and that made one more cause of enmity to his rival, Gussie Robinson.

When he had finally made himself presentable, he went into dinner only to find the table cleared away and no grub to be seen.

"If I can't get good to give calves too much

"Mrs. Bakah, I want me dinnah!" he shouted.

"Why didn't you come in when it was ready, Mr. Smith?" asked the mistress of the hash house, frowning.

"I couldn't, don't ye know, but I want it now."

"Do you think this is a 'meals at all hours' house, Mr. Smith?" was the indignant question.

"I want me dinnah, baw Jove," returned the dude.

"Maybe you take this for a hotel?"

"No, baw Jove, I nevah did," returned Chollie, honestly.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded the irate landlady.

She felt that she could browbeat the poor fellow all she chose, considering that he owed her so much.

"No—nothing, Mrs. Bakah. I wasn't a waw that I had said anything."

"No, you never do, you idiot."

"Yes'm."

"You'll find something in the kitchen, I guess. I can't keep the dining-room open all day."

Then she swept out of the room, and Chollie had to devour his cold grub in the kitchen.

Then he went back to the office, late, of course, and got a jawing from old Griggs for staying away so long.

"It's all that fellah Wobinson's doings," mused Chollie, when the lawyer had gone.

"I nevah do get into twouble, baw Jove, that he isn't at the bottom of it. If it was the fashion, I'd make him fight a duel, but I can't handle a sword, and a pistol makes such a howid noise."

However, he was kept too busy during the afternoon, copying documents, serving notices and pursuing his law studies, to think very much about his troubles, and he soon forgot them.

Gussie Robinson felt particularly happy during this period.

He had witnessed Chollie's adventure with the sprinkler, and his vapid face wore a sickly smile for several hours afterward in consequence.

During the afternoon, just after the academy had turned its boys loose upon a long suffering public, something happened which caused Gussie's sweet smile to fade away and perish.

Pompey Snowdrop, the colored artist already mentioned in this narrative, came that way with a pail half full of whitewash which had been left over from his latest job.

Pompey was a tall, double-jointed coon, with no superfluous meat upon his big bones and, like the majority of his race, got tired very easily and very often.

One of his tired spells struck him as he reached the drug store and he sat down to rest.

In front of the establishment of Dr. Bolus was a long stoop or platform, reached by a couple of steps, and here the loungers of the town were frequently found.

Pompey sat on the stoop, put his pail along-side and began to moralize.

Now everybody knows that moralizing is sleepy work, and it was not long before our colored brother became drowsy.

The sun was warm and he was tired, and the stoop was a fine place to rest on.

Taking all these things together, it need not be wondered if Pompey fell asleep.

That's just what he did do.

He was right in the middle of a cozy little nap when along came Tom Trust, Ned New and one or two others.

"Sh! don't say a word," whispered Tom, stealing a glance into the drug shop. "Here's a bully shap ready made and a perfect fit besides."

Gussie was alone in the shop, and was polishing up one of the show-cases, for old Bolus had no respect whatever for his feelings, and made him do all sorts of drudgery in his off hours.

Tom looked at Pompey and then at Gussie, and winked.

Then the boys held a hurried consultation, and gathered at one end of the stoop out of sight from the shop.

Suddenly a terrible cry burst upon the stillness.

"Fire!"

Four or five boys all yelling together can make a considerable noise, let me tell you.

Those boys were no exception, and they just whooped her up lively.

Gussie heard the cry, dropped his piece of chamois-skin and made a bolt for the door in a jiffy.

Then Gussie skipped away, while Ned went



He did not know where the fire was, but it might be in the building, and he was not going to run any risks.

Consequently he made a break without stopping to see where he was going.

That's just what Tom Trust had reckoned upon.

The big pail of whitewash was right in the dude's path as he came rushing out.

He did not see it, of course, and the first thing he knew he had run right against it.

Over it went and over went Gussie at the same time.

Both tumbled off the stoop together, and both were very much together when they reached the walk.

"I'se a good mind to shake yo' out ob yo' boots, I is. Hain't yo' got nuffin' bettah to do dan to go frowin' away a po' man's fings? Bettah go to wo'k den, if you habn't, yo' mis'able loafah!"

"That's right, Pompey," cried Tom; "give it to the dude, shake the shoestrings off him."

How Chollie did chuckle at the discomfiture of his enemy!

How the boys did laugh at the whole business!

"Let go of me, you nahsty black fellah!" cried Gussie. "You put that yaw pail just wheah you knew I would twip ovah it, you know you did."

"Kean't yo' see nuffin'?" demanded Pompey, giving the dude, a shake. "Am yo' blind

sick, the fact of the case being that she was as well as anybody, but very cranky.

"Here—here! What's all this?" snarled the doctor, scowling over his big spectacles. "Who told you to whitewash my sidewalk, sir?"

"Nobody did, sah, but dat boy ob yo's he kick my pail ober and lose all dat wash wha' I was gwine to fix de ole woman's kitchen wif."

"H'm! I don't know anything about that. You'd better clean up this rubbish at once. I can't have my lady patrons ruining their dresses with that dirt."

"Reckon yo' clean it up yo'se'f," muttered Pompey as he hung his pail on his arm and sauntered off. "I clean up my own mussin's, but I don' clean up yo's, not fo' a cent!"



When they had each taken a step in advance, Tom Trust gave the boys the wink. Poor unconscious dudes. They saw not those uplifted sticks, they noticed not those grinning faces. One, two, three! Biff!

You couldn't tell which was dude and which was whitewash, they were so mixed up.

Now it happened that Chollie Smith was returning from one of his trips around town for Mr. Griggs, and had reached the drug store just as the thing occurred.

He did not know how it all came about, but he saw Gussie wallowing in whitewash, and it did his heart good to see the picnic.

"Aw, awfully funny, baw Jove!" he chuckled, holding his hands on his sides. "That fellah will be whitah than he evah was betaw, he will, baw Jove!"

Pompey Snowdrop, aroused from his slumbers by the racket, now awoke.

It took him but a few seconds to realize his loss.

His whitewash was running into the gutter, and the pail was about to follow suit.

At this moment Gussie had just struggled to his feet.

Pompey laid the loss of his stock in trade to that dude without stopping to reason the thing out.

"You mis'able loafah you, wha' fo' yo' kick ober my pail?" he cried, seizing Gussie by the collar.

"I didn't, you vulgah niggah. Let go of my collah."

as well as foolish? Reckon dat pail am big enuff to see if yo' car' to look fo' it."

Then that angry coon gave the dude another shake, causing the whitewash to fly in all directions.

Pompey got a good-sized drop of it in his eye, and at once suspended operations.

Gussie broke away at this, and avenged himself upon the coon by kicking him in the shin and then lighting out.

"Oh, lan' ob glory! I'se killed!" howled the coon, dancing about. "I'se blinded, fo' suah!"

His antics made the boys laugh harder than ever, and during the circus Gussie fled into the shop.

Chollie espied Griggs coming down the street, and he, too, dusted.

"Get on to the black and white coon!" chuckled Ned, Pompey's dusky countenance having a long white streak across it, where he had tried to rub the whitening out of his eye.

He recovered the use of the same about this time, and began to hunt for his pail, which had rolled into the gutter.

Then along came Dr. Bolus, who had been dosing old Mrs. Walkingbeam with dried apple pills, and earning his little two dollars a visit by making her believe she was awfully

This was open defiance and Bolus was astonished.

He was bound to get square on some one, though, and so he sailed into the store while the boys departed.

"Augustus!" he cried in tones of command.

"Yas, sah," said poor Gussie, meekly.

"Get a pail of water and a broom and wash that stuff off of the walk."

"Yas, sah," answered Gussie, who was trying to wash some of the white off his own clothes.

"I want it done now, not next week," stormed Bolus.

"Yas, sah, I'm getting the watah," stammered Gussie.

Bolus did not stop to investigate, but went behind the prescription counter and did not see the terrible condition of the poor dude's trousers.

The idea of having to wash sidewalks was very repugnant to the dude's sensitive soul.

"I don't see why he don't get a boy to do these things," mused Gussie, as he gargled the walk with cold water. "He's a weal stingy old duffah, and when I get to be a weglah man and weah whiskahs I'll staht a staw of my own and wun him out of town."



While he was still engaged in cleaning the walk, along came Tom and Chollie, arm-in-arm, like regular chums.

"That fellah cahn't even wash a walk pwopahly," said Chollie, in confidence to Tom. "I wondah the doctah hiahs such a shiftless fellah, don't you, deah boy?"

"Tell yaw fwiend that the next time he comes into ouah staw he'd bettah have money enough to tweek," retorted Gussie, speaking to Tom, and ignoring Chollie entirely.

"You weally don't speak to that fellah Wobinson, do you, Tom, deah boy?" asked Chollie, quite audibly, as he and Tom passed on.

"Oh, no, not often."

"I wouldn't, deah boy, he's so awfully low, baw Jove!"

"The idea of that vulgah pawson, Smith, dawing to speak of me in that mannah," muttered Gussie, coloring. "I'm weally quite shocked."

The following afternoon the academy boys were amusing themselves on the street, as usual, Tom Trust having suggested something new and striking.

The country store, which was a combination of grocery, dry-goods establishment, feed store, hardware shop, and a little of everything else, was kept by a jolly Dutchman named Dingelspiel, who bore with stolid indifference the tricks which the boys were constantly playing upon him, and was therefore considered a very good fellow.

Dingelspiel had been getting in a lot of crockery that day and the empty hogsheads stood in a line in front of the store, five or six of them all together.

Tom got on to these hogsheads and suggested a dandy scheme to Ned and the other boys.

There was a new house going up in the next street and thither the boys adjourned.

Each boy supplied himself with a lath which he broke in two, retaining the longer piece, and thus armed, they returned to Dingelspiel's.

"We can have the dandiest kind of time," laughed Tom, "and never get caught at it, either."

"The best way to work it will be to wait till two fellows meet and then let them have it. They'll each accuse the other, of course."

"All right. In with you, boys."

Then the boys jumped into the hogshead, there being one apiece, Tom taking the end one on the right, and Ned that on the left.

When they stood up the boys' heads were visible, but as soon as they squatted you could not see a sign of them.

Each boy had his flat stick with him, the use of which will be presently made manifest.

"Down with you, boys," whispered Tom, presently. "Here comes the very fellows we most want to see."

Down went those six boys, the hogsheads containing them looking as innocent as could be.

Chollie Smith and Gussie Robinson were both on the street that afternoon.

They each had an hour or two off, and both were taking advantage of it.

Each knew that the other would be out, and each desired to crush his obnoxious rival.

Both were gotten up in the most hilariously loud style, and both expected to do no end of mashing in the course of the day.

As it happened they met right in front of Dingelspiel's.

Chollie took in Gussie and Gussie did the same for Chollie, but neither would recognize the other.

They sailed by with their noses in the air, their arms stuck out, and their knees having the proper curve.

They would not look at each other, of course, and both turned their heads away as they passed.

When they were just back to back, six heads popped out of six casks and six arms were raised.

When they had each taken a step in advance, Tom Trust gave the boys the wink.

Poor unconscious dudes.

They saw not those uplifted sticks, they noticed not those grinning faces.

One, two, three!

Biff!

Tom Trust had put up a job for somebody, he did not care who, and the two dudes were the first ones to appear.

Tom and the boys secreted themselves in the casks until Chollie and Gussie had passed.

The dudes turned their heads away, and so failed to see the boys when the latter popped up.

Each boy had a piece of lath in his hand, and at a wink from Tom they all let fly.

Whack, whack, spat!

Three boys to each dude, and how they did make the sticks fly.

On the head, on the back, across the ear, and wherever they could get in a crack.

The dudes turned and faced each other.

Their hats were dented in, and there were dust marks on their backs.

The casks stood as before, and not a boy could be seen.

They had all popped in like turtles in their shells.

The dudes now stood glaring at each other in rage.

Each thought the other had struck him, for no one else was in sight.

"Yaw a low, vulgah pawson," said Gussie.

"You howid fellah, how daw you stwike me like that?" asked Chollie.

"I nevah did, you sawsy bwute."

"Don't tell me I lie, you fellah."

"If it wasn't faw making a distawbance, I'd thwash you."

"It's lucky faw you, sah, that I have on me gloves."

There the two idiots stood chinning away and clenching their fists, but never getting any closer.

It was a case of "one's afraid and the other daren't."

They glared and glared, and chinned and growled, but not a blow was struck.

"I'm ashamed of myself faw speaking to such a pawson," continued Gussie.

"You ought to be pwoud to have me speak to you, fellah."

"Who evah hawd of a Smith? Only cads aw named that."

"I wouldn't be called Wobinson if there wasn't anothah name in the wawld."

"Cause you couldn't, you nahsty bwute."

"I'll have you awested faw two cents."

"You ought to be wun out of the town. Yaw a disgwace to it."

"It'll take maw than you to do it, baw Jove."

"Bah, yaw not wawth talking to."

"Don't you dalah to speak to me on the stweet again, fellah. If you do I'll stwike you weal hahd."

"Bah, you couldn't hawt a fly. Go soak yaw head, you wetch."

"Oh, you howid wuffian!"

Then they turned their backs upon one another.

Biff! Whack!

Tom and Ned got in two dandy cracks.

They ducked down again just in time.

Then Chollie and Gussie faced each other once more.

"Faw two pins I'd bwweak yaw jaw."

"I've a good mind to smash yaw nose."

"How daw you stwike me?"

"Don't do that again, you vulgah fellah."

They glared and shook their fists, but that was all.

It made those boys in the casks want to giggle.

They kept still, though, and did not give themselves away.

This time the dudes backed away until the line of casks was between them.

Then they turned.

Whack! Crack!

Tom and Ned got in two more daisy hits.

The dudes turned and faced each other, each with the utmost astonishment depicted upon his face.

They could not make it out at all.

"Bah! Yaw no good!" they both said at once.

Then they wheeled around and marched off in disgust, never once turning to look around.

Then Tom, Ned and the boys made their appearance.

"Great success of our new act," chuckled Tom.

"Dudes knocked out in three rounds," added Ned.

Meantime these two dudes pursued their way in different directions and yet to the same destination.

On the next street, running parallel to the main thoroughfare, was a quiet barber shop kept by a Dutchman, where only the nobs went to get shaved.

By some strange chance the two dudes conceived the idea of going to this shop at the same moment.

Neither could have known of the other's intention, or both would have kept away.

The shop was in the middle of the block on the other street, and each had the same distance to go to get to it, though traveling in opposite directions.

Greatly to the surprise of both, the dudes met again, this time in front of the barber's.

Of course they would not speak, and both made a simultaneous rush for the door, thinking to avoid the other.

There was a double screen door in place, and they both entered at the same moment, each taking one leaf of the door.

Frank, the barber, and Emil, his clerk, as the boys called the journeyman, were both unoccupied as the dudes entered.

"You're next, sir!" said both, from force of habit.

If there had been forty ahead of the dudes the cry would have been the same.

Chollie hung up his hat before Gussie did, and took a seat in the boss's chair, leaving Gussie to take the other or none.

Gussie wasn't going to let his rival get ahead of him in everything, however, and he set his brain to work to think out some revenge.

"You may twim my haiah, Fwank," said Chollie, "and then flx my bang a little. It's getting vewy wagged."

"All right, Mr. Smit; sit a little higher once."

"Ah, Emil, how do?" said Gussie, taking a seat. "I think I'll have a shave."

At the word poor Chollie turned blue with rage.

His rival getting a shave while he sat there like a child having his hair cut!

As Gussie had foreseen, the shot had told. He was a street ahead of Chollie at the latest returns.

"Shave, Mr. Robinson, yes, sir, your beard is very strong, sir," said Emil, with a Franco-German accent. "Shave close, sir?"

"No, not vewy close," said Gussie, "about medium, ye know."

That dude had about as much mustache as a baby, but that didn't matter to the barber.

He had been ordered to shave his customer and he meant to make an attempt at it, whether there was anything to shave or not.

Gussie felt like an angel in heaven when the lather was slapped upon his cheeks and lip.

He had several times, in the deep privacy of his own room, lathered himself and passed a razor over his face with the fancied idea that he was shaving himself.

This was in a real barber shop, however, and it was quite another affair.

The sensation was like coming suddenly into the bright sunshine from a pitch dark dungeon.

He was getting his first real bona fide shave and his hated rival had to look on and see it.

Verily it was a *coup d'etat* on Gussie's part and Chollie would be crushed.

So he was, though only for a time.

Gussie was one lap ahead of him, but he didn't intend that such would be the case long.

Emil lathered, and rubbed, and scraped just as though Gussie had a six weeks' growth of razor-destroying stubble on his face instead of down.

However funny it might be to any one else, that Dutchman considered it in the light of business alone.

Frank, on the contrary, was chuckling to himself, for he thought this the best gag of the season.

Gussie's shave and Chollie's hair cut came to an end at the same time, and then it was Chollie's inning.

"Aw, Fwank, guess I'll have a shave," he said carelessly. "I need one awfully, baw Jove; cahn't go maw than two days without a shave."

Where was Gussie now?

About even, but Chollie's next card was a trump.

"You'll find my cup and wazah in the wack, Fwank. You know the numbah."

So Chollie had a cup and a razor at the barber's!

That sent Gussie's stock away down.

He must bring up something to beat Chollie's last move or he was lost.

"Don't twy to give me bang, Emil," he said to the barber. "Only childwen wear bangs, ye know."

That was one on Chollie.

Frank, the barber snickered, and so far for-

### PART III.

**T**WO dandy dudes dressed up to kill passing each other on the street without a sign of recognition.

Six roguish boys in six big casks right in front of the disdainful dudes, who saw nothing but the clouds above.



got himself as to fill Chollie's mouth with lather.

"You clumsy fellah, yaw putting lathah in my mouth!" sputtered Chollie.

"Oxcuse me, I tought dot was your whitskers; dey look all der same once."

Then he had to chuckle, and Gussie, getting down from his high seat, said to the sober-minded Emil:

"I suppose you only chawge boys half pwice when they get shaved?" meaning Chollie, of course.

"It was fifteen cents for a shave already, if you was a boy or a man once," said Emil. "I don't charge you some more the second time as I do now alreaty. That was the price."

For the present, however, they went their several ways, and did not meet again that day.

They made their influence felt upon each other, however, even if they did not meet.

Chollie, after calling on his girl and promising to take her to a picnic, finally left, as he saw no chance of being invited to remain to supper.

To reach his boarding-house he was obliged to pass the house where Griggs lived.

The coachman was at the area gate, and as Chollie came up he said:

"See here neow, dude, plwat for do ye neglect yer work and give me extra jobs. Begorrah, I've had to run all around town becase ye wor not in th' offis."

Along came Gussie, swinging his stick, and feeling as happy as a tomtit on a twig.

"Begob, he houlds his head mighty high. Sure, I don't think he's going to spake to me at all. That settles it."

With that the coachman suddenly shifted the nozzle of his hose, and sent a stream of water right at the dude.

It took him in the mouth, and for a moment he thought he was drowned.

Down he went, and of course he had to sit in the only puddle there was on the whole walk.

"Faw Goodness' sake what do you mean, you howwid pawson?" he exclaimed.

The horrid person turned the hose on him and gave him a thorough drenching.



The casks stood as before, and not a boy could be seen. They had all popped in like turtles in their shells. The dudes now stood glaring at each other in rage. Each thought the other had struck him, for no one else was in sight.

"Poor Gussie had been blown up by his own engines."

A joke in the hands of a Dutchman becomes a two-edged sword, and is as apt to cut one way as the other.

Gussie was sorry he had spoken.

There was no other way in which he could get even with Chollie now, and so he put on his hat, which Emil brushed and straightened, and left the shop feeling very sad.

As he was going out, however, he heard Frank say, with a loud laugh:

"Dot was a goot geg, Mr. Smit, about dot cup und razor off yours, don't it? Dot dood belief dot, I dinks."

Then Gussie felt better, and Chollie wanted to strangle the barber for letting the cat out of the bag.

Frank was nearly a dollar richer by the transaction, however, and he could afford to laugh.

"I think both them fellows was fools already," remarked Emil as Chollie was going out. "They have no more beards as a baby once."

Neither Chollie nor Gussie felt any happier for having been to the barber's, but each laid his discomfort at the door of the other, and resolved to have revenge.

"Sawves you wight, I wish," answered Chollie. "I am not employed to wun ewands, and that's just what they hiah you faw. I'm a lawyah, not a sawvant, fellah."

"Oh, begorra, wud ye luck at the airs av him. Go on neow, dude, or I'll break the head av ye."

"Yaw only a low fellah, and fit faw nothing but to wun awound town on ewands," retorted Chollie.

"Go on neow, dude, or I'll smash yer jaw."

"You wouldn't daw do it, fellah. I can have you fiahed out to-mowow, if I like."

Chollie took good care, however, to keep out of the man's way, and the latter's wrath followed him.

An hour or so later, the coachman was washing the walk and front stoop with a hose.

Along came Gussie, who had been luckier than Chollie, and had bored an early tea out of his girl, being now on his way home to catch a late supper at his hash foundry.

The coachman saw him, and supposed him to be Chollie coming back.

"Begorrah, here comes the dude again!" he muttered. "Mebby he thinks I've forgotten the lip he gev me just now. I haven't, thin, begorra!"

"Give me sass again, will yez?" asked the wrathful coachman.

Then he gave Gussie another dose of *aqua pura*.

"Stop, you vulgah fellah, what do you mean? Help, police!"

"Begob, it's not the polis ye want," laughed Paddy. "It's the like-saving corpse to dhrag ye out av the wather."

Then Gussie got another bucketful.

"Give me anny more guff now?" asked the coachman.

"I nevah saw you befaw, you howwid Iwish-man," blubbered Gussie.

Paddy took a second look at the dude.

"Begorrah, it's not our monkey at all, but anither wan!" he exclaimed. "How wor I to know they wor twins."

Then he laid down the hose and began to laugh.

There wasn't anything mean about that laugh.

It came out spontaneously, and could be heard in the next town.

"Oh, my! Oh, my! wor there iver such a mistake med in all me life! Oho, but I'll die av laughing."

The harder he laughed the harder he wanted to, and he just doubled up with mirth.



Gussie got up, feeling very mad and exceedingly sore.

Once more he had been taken for Chollie Smith, and that was enough to make any one mad.

He had received a ducking evidently intended for Chollie, and that riled him again.

And there was that Mick, laughing ready to kill himself at the dude's misfortune.

Suddenly Gussie saw a chance to get even.

Paddy had left the hose lying on the sidewalk with the water running out of it with a rush.

Lucky discovery for Gussie.

He snatched up the hose and leveled it at that funny Mick.

His laughter was suddenly drowned by a flood of water.

"Paw watah ovah me, and tawn the hose on me, will you?" cried Gussie. "How do you like it yaw ownself, Mistah Iwish?"

Mr. Irish did not like it at all.

He tried to get away and paralyze the dude.

It was no go.

The dude had the advantage, and kept it.

Paddy, seeing that there was no help for him, dashed up the stoop.

At that moment the door opened.

Out came Griggs.

Paddy ran into him and nearly knocked the breath out of him.

Gussie sent a stream flying after the Mick as he ran up the stoop.

Griggs got it as well as the butt in the stomach.

It was several moments before Gussie realized the real situation of affairs.

Then he tumbled to the fact that he was giving old Griggs a free bath.

His own boss would be sure to hear of it, and there would be trouble for him.

He dropped that hose as if it had been hot iron.

Then he went flying down the street with his coat tails standing out straight.

"Michael!" cried Griggs, in stern tones, as soon as he had recovered his breath, "who was that fellow?"

Mike did not know how to answer.

Griggs solved the problem.

"Wasn't it Smith, that idiotic clerk of mine?"

"Sure, I believe it wor," answered Mike, catching at the suggestion.

Now, if Gussie complained he could be confronted with a case of mistaken identity.

"Why did he turn the hose on you, Michael?"

"He's too lippy for anything, sor, and he do be all the time barashin' me."

"The blockhead! I'll teach him to turn the hose on me," muttered Griggs, as he turned and went into the house.

"Begob, that wor lucky for me," mused Mike.

"I didn't know phwat to tell him, but now he thinks our own dude did it. I'll get off, and maybe Misther Charlie'll get the sack."

Not long afterwards, just before dark, Griggs went down to the office.

Whom must he meet but Chollie Smith smoking a cigarette, right in front of the office.

"Do I owe you anything, Smith?" asked Griggs.

"Yes, sah, a week's salawy."

"Draw it to-morrow and then find another job."

Poor Chollie was stumped.

"What is the mattah, sah?" he gasped. "I thought we had a steady engagement?"

"Do you think it a part of your legal education to turn the hose upon your employer, sir?"

"Me, Mistah Gwiggs!"

"Yes, you. You intended to wet Michael, but I got it."

"Me, Mistah Gwiggs?"

Poor Chollie was dreadfully mystified.

"Yes, you, confound you. Don't you understand English?"

"Yas, sah, but I haven't seen Michael faw maw than an houah, and then he had no hose."

Griggs felt of Chollie's coat.

It was as dry as a chip.

"You didn't have a fuss with Michael just now and throw water on him?"

"No, sah," said Chollie meekly.

Just then Gussie passed by in the gathering gloom.

It was not too dark for the lawyer to perceive that he was tolerably wet.

The truth dawned upon him.

"That's all right, Smith," he said, "you can stay right on. It was a mistake."

"I'll give that other dude a lesson, see if I

don't," muttered Griggs, as he followed Gussie.

Maybe he would and maybe he would not.

PART IV.

THE LAWYER GRIGGS was on the war path.

He had discovered that Gussie, instead of Chollie, was the one that had given him that wetting.

Gussie passed him on the street while he was giving Chollie a laying out for his supposed misdemeanor.

Griggs followed.

He meant to make it warm for that dude.

He had taken but a few steps, however, when the proprietor of one of the stores on the block called out:

"I say, Griggs, come in here a moment, won't you? I want to tell you something."

Griggs went in and remained several minutes.

"The old wepwobate has gone," mused Chollie, "and I'm glad of it. Wondah how that fellah Robinson got so wet? Baw Jove, I'd like to go in theah and guy the wetch."

At that moment who must come along but Tom Trust, who was around looking for fun.

"Hallo, Chollie, Old Man, come and have a cigarette. It's my treat, you know, and we'll make that fellow Robinson wait on us."

"All right, Tom, deah boy, with the gweatest of pleashah. Does old Bolus keep 'em?"

"He keeps anything that people will buy."

The two young fellows went into the drug store but saw nothing of Gussie, that young gentleman being engaged in putting on an old but dry suit of clothes which he kept in a room back of the shop.

Having lighted up they left the store, Chollie being disappointed in not having had a chance to lord it over the other dude.

Griggs, in the meantime, had left the store he had entered, carrying with him a ripe musk melon the proprietor had presented him.

Just before he reached the drug shop he thought he saw Gussie coming out.

"I'll give it to that young donkey," he muttered, as he slipped into the shadow of a tall box.

In a minute the dude and a companion came down the steps and passed his place of ambush.

Whack! Squash!

"There, you young ape! Wet me again with my own hose, will you?"

"Baw Jove! I believe my bwains have been dashed out! I can feel them wunning down my neck, don't ye know?"

"What's the matter, Chollie? What hit you? Here, come out of that."

Then Tom grabbed hold of Griggs as he started to walk away, and hauled him into the light.

"Mistah Gwiggs, what do you mean by this assault? You have wuined my hat."

"The other monkey, as I live!" cried Griggs.

"H'm! two such fools are too many for one small town. No wonder people make mistakes."

"Sah!" exclaimed Chollie.

"I took you for that other fool, Robinson," chuckled Griggs. "I'll pay for your hat. Sorry I lost my melon, for it was a good one. Good-night, idiot!"

Then he hurried off, while Chollie examined his hat more closely.

"Your brains are not hurt, old man," said Tom, ready to split, "but the melon is ruined."

"The hawid fellah," cried the dude, nearly choking. "He took me faw that fellah Wobinson. The idea!"

"Yes, it was pretty bad; but you'll get a new hat out of it."

"A new hat cahn't wepaiah the injuwty of being mistaken faw that fellah Wobinson," sobbed Chollie.

"Well, come and brace up on an ice cream. That'll do you good."

"Thanks, deah boy, awfully; but I'm afwaid ice cweam wouldn't do me any good. I feel just like going off and getting dwunk, weal dwunk, don't ye know, I feel so bad."

"What! Go into a real bar-room?"

"Yas, deah boy. I feel awful wicked."

"You look it," answered Tom, chuckling in spite of himself.

"Now yaw making spawt of me, and I think it's weal cwuel," said Chollie, beginning to blubber, and swallowing half of his cigarette.

"Oh, no, indeed I'm not," said Tom, hastily.

"Yes, you are, and it's too bad. I'd bettah go home," and he went.

"It's a wonder I kept in as long as I did,"

chuckled Tom, when Chollie had departed.

"A little more and I would have busted a blood vessel," he said.

The two dudes were now even in being taken for one another and that increased their angry feelings.

The next day Gussie went by the lawyer's office wearing a flaming red cravat and smoking a real cigar, and when Chollie saw it he nearly fainted.

He allowed that that dude could not surpass him, however, and in the afternoon he came out with a tie three shades redder than Gussie's and a gray derby with a wide blue band around it.

"Guess I'll pawalyze that fellah," he remarked, as he paused in front of Bolus's to read a bill posted on the tree box.

Of course Gussie saw him and his soul was filled with envy away up to the muzzle.

He guessed that no lawyer's clerk was going to put on any more style than he did, and he just clubbed his brain to get up something that would knock Chollie silly.

That afternoon he appeared on the street with a real high hat—none of your imitation affairs, but a silk hat, bell crown, curved brim, black satin faced, and narrow band.

There!

If that wouldn't paralyze that lawyer's clerk nothing would.

As luck would have it, the academy boys had just been turned loose.

The seminary girls were out in full force, too, and flirtations were the order of the day.

That high hat of Gussie's put everything else in the shade, however.

Mashing would have to take a back seat when that was on deck.

The boys got onto it with both feet.

"Say, ma, I'm sixteen, can I wear a high hat?" sang out the boys.

"Ah there, hat! Where are you taking the dude?"

"Oh, girls, doesn't he look too elegant to exist?"

"Three shots for five cents, fellers. Bet you can't knock it off."

"A cigar for the fellow that gets three bull's eyes."

Gussie began to tremble in his Oxford ties.

At first his bosom swelled with pride and his elbows stuck out at right angles to his sides, while his little mincing gait was just lovely to witness.

Now, however, he began to feel nervous.

Suppose those horrid boys were to throw stones at that new tile?

Just then he met Ned New and his spirits arose.

"Aw, how do, old chappie?" he said, with a sickly smile. "Glad to see you. Going far?"

"Don't mind if I do. When did you get the dicer?"

"The what, old chappie?"

"The plug."

"Beg pawdon, old chappie? I don't understand."

"Why, the tile, of course."

"You'll have to explain."

"The new thatch there."

"I weally don't catch on."

"The block cover. Don't you tumble?"

"No, I weally don't, old chappie."

"Where did you catch the new high hat?" asked Ned, chuckling.

"Oh, that isn't new, ye know. I've wawn it faw months. You must have seen it befaw."

"No, never."

"Why, yas, old chappie, you must have seen it. It's quite an old story now."

Ned was aware that this was a fib, and he gave an inward chuckle.

"Here comes Chollie Smith, and he's got Tom Trust with him," whispered Ned, suddenly. "Brace up, Gus."

That dude did brace up like a little man, and he passed his rival without the least sign of recognition.

Chollie turned pale and then giggled.

Gussie was a lap ahead, but he might yet cause his rival's laurels to wither if he was in time.

"Isn't it widiculous to see the aiahs that boys put oh these days?" he said in a loud tone to Tom.

"Yes, exceedingly so," answered Tom, winking over his shoulder at Ned.

"That fellah cahn't weah a high hat in faw yeahs, baw Jove! He isn't big enough."

"Some fellahs need a high hat to make men of them, don't they, old chappie?" asked Gussie in the same tone.

Then the two couples passed on out of hearing.



"It's awfully absawd, the lugs that fellah, Wobinson, puts on," said Chollie.

All the same, the high hat had done its work, and there was no peace for Chollie until he got one to beat it.

When Tom and Ned met again they fixed up a dandy scheme to play off on the two dudes.

That evening the new reading-room of the Hunterdon Literary Society was opened, and everybody went.

Gussie wore his high hat, of course, and put it in a conspicuous place in the cloak-room.

After a time Tom came along with Chollie, and Ned fixed it that he and Gussie would arrive soon after.

Tom put Gussie's high hat on Chollie's head, walked him in front of a glass and said:

from Hunterdon, to which everybody and his wife went.

The Methodist church was the biggest and toniest, as well as noisiest church in town, and whatever it took hold of was bound to go through.

If anybody can coax money out of people's pockets, it's a good, loud-voiced Methodist, and as this picnic was to be given for the benefit of the church, and not for the heathens in Kamschatka, it was sure to be a howling success.

All the first families went, and the edge of the woods, where the hilarities took place, reminded one of an old-fashioned muster day, or circus in the backwoods, there were so many teams of all sorts hitched there.

bosses here, their husbands doing the work while the women gave orders and bustled around like hens with one chicken.

Here and there through the grove were rough tables, where small and very select parties spread their own feasts, and enjoyed more or less privacy.

Skirmishing parties could be seen going for coffee, or water from the spring, or ice-cream, maybe, the glitter of tin pails and the ring of merry laughter filling all the woods.

The girls had on their whitest frocks and gayest ribbons, the boys had on their Sunday best, the old maids gave an extra twist to their corkscrew ringlets, and even the old campaigners, who had long since made their market, freshened up and looked their hand-



"Yaw an obstinate pig!" "Yaw no gentleman!" "Yaw a liah!" That settled it. That was fighting talk, and there could be no back-down now. The two dudes came together with a crash like that of two belligerent billy goats.

"Yes, Chollie, it looks first rate on you. It's a much handsomer one than that dude's, too. You've got more style than he has."

Just then Gussie came up and heard this remark.

"Let's have a game of football, fellahs," he remarked, and away went the hat from Chollie's head.

Gussie got the first kick, and then all hands got there.

That was a sickly-looking hat when it got around to Gussie again.

He picked it up and handed it to Chollie, with the remark:

"Heah's your hat, sah."

"Bettah look at it fawst, fellah," retorted Chollie, icily.

Gussie looked inside.

There he saw his own initials pasted on the crown.

He nearly fainted, and when all hands roared with laughter he was ready to kick himself down-stairs.

He was satisfied to wear a derby after that, and the very sight of a silk tile made him sick.

A few days after this, there was a big church picnic in the woods a mile or more

Buckboards, buggies, hay carts, carryalls, market wagons, barouches and sulkies might be seen standing around among the trees, while there were enough horses to furnish an army, to say nothing of oxen, colts and mules.

All the boys and girls of the town were there, whether they went to the Methodist church or to none, for what they wanted was a good time and they were bound to have it.

Sister Broadax presided over the coffee, which was made in a big wash boiler holding ten gallons or more, placed over a stone fireplace where a big log of wood snapped and cracked and blazed, sending out no end of sparks.

Then there was the ice-cream booth, where Sister Higgins and Miss Johnson ladled out big plates of country ice-cream, looking like butter, to be sure, but wholesome for all that.

There was also the dining tent or pavilion, whichever you might like to call it, though it was neither, where those who had not brought their own grub could get a square meal for fifty cents and fill up on corned beef, roast beef, ham, tongue, sausages, cake, pie, pudding, green corn, sweet potatoes, apple dumplings, and all the delicacies and indigestibles of the season.

Mis' Jackson and Mis' Hopkins were the

somest, or homeliest, it might be—at any rate, it was the best they could do.

Of course there wasn't any dancing, for that was heathenish, but there were swings, "scups," the girls called them, although a scup is a fish, as well as other harmless amusements, and then the girls and boys could stroll off in the woods, sit on mossy banks, and lay pipe for a cold, or wander through the brush and tear their clothes, make wreaths of oak leaves to adorn themselves with, talk nonsense to each other, and, in fact, make fools of themselves, as all boys and girls do at picnics.

Chollie Smith and Gussie Robinson were at the picnic, and each had caught onto his Sunday girl, and was in the seventeenth paradise of ecstasy.

They were both lucky in catching onto a free lunch, and enjoyed the rare luxury of a first class feed without having to pay for it.

They drank coffee, too, the giddy things, without its affecting their brains, but then, country coffee wouldn't hurt even a dude, so there's nothing in that.

"Oh, Mr. Smith," said Susie Gushten, Chollie's girl, "don't you think the woods are delightful at this season?"

"Yas, baw Jove, and at any season, don't ye



know, pprovided theah's a nice gawl to walk with."

"Oh, Mr. Smith!" said Susie, blushing under her pearl powder, for country girls use the article as much, if not more, than their city cousins.

Well, having put a wreath of oak leaves about his nobby straw hat, stuck his button holes full of daisies and adorned his big cane with dandelions, Miss Susie thought she might as well take Chollie for a walk.

After tramping all over the place they came to a brook which ran sluggishly along between high banks carrying its mud-laden waters to the river somewhere in the neighborhood.

As no teams ever passed through this part of the country there was nothing but a foot-bridge spanning the gentle stream.

It was not much of a bridge, either, come to look at it.

Just a long, heavy plank extending from bank to bank.

It was wide enough for one, if the one wasn't too fat, but two could not have passed each other on it.

"Aw, heah is the bwide," said Chollie, as they reached it. "Bettah let me go fawst, Miss Susie, so that I can see if it is secaw."

"Oh, I've crossed over that bridge loads of times," said Miss Gushton.

"I think I'd bettah go fawst," said Chollie. It was just as well that he did so.

Hardly had Chollie and his girl set foot upon the plank at one end, than Gussie and his girl came upon it at the other.

"Oh, there's Clara Morbus with that funny Mr. Robinson," said Susie in a loud whisper. "Don't let them push us back."

"There's that horrid Susie Gushton and her dude," said Clara. "Make them give way. We were on the bridge first."

The two dudes advanced till they met in the very middle of the bridge.

The girls remained on their respective ends, watching their cavaliers with great interest.

At first the rivals would not speak.

They contented themselves by glaring at one another like a couple of raging lions.

Then each stuck a single eye-glass in his optic and glared all the more.

Still not a word was spoken.

Then each raised his right hand containing his stick as high as his breast-bone.

Position Number Three was held for ten seconds.

It was all very thrilling.

Then each glared across the other's shoulder toward the opposite bank.

"Well, fellah?" said Chollie, at length.

"Who is this vulgah pawson?" asked Gussie, as though addressing some one on the bank.

Then Chollie glared and elevated his nose.

"Aw you awaw, sah, that yaw obstwucting my pawth?" asked Gussie, finally.

"Claw out of heah, fellah," said Chollie.

"Haven't you any mannahs?"

"As much as you have, you hawid lawyah's clawk."

"I'd wathah be that than an errand boy in a dwug store," retorted Chollie, flushing.

"Stand aside, you vulgah pawson."

"Stand aside yaw ownself."

"Not faw a Smith, nevah. Who are the Smiths anyhow?"

"The Smiths are as good as yaw old Wobinsons, anyhow. Yaw fathah used to gathah wags."

"Yaws bought junk faw a living, you puppy."

"Puppy yaw ownself, wag pickah!"

"Will you get off this bwide, junk man?"

"Get off yawself."

"I was heah fawst."

"You was not, bwute."

"I was so, cawlf."

"Yaw no gentleman."

"Yaw another."

Then they stood and glared at each other again.

There wasn't a foot space between them.

Both had their sticks raised but neither wanted to strike the first blow.

The girls stood watching the contest, wondering how it would end.

"Go back, sah, aw I'll thwow you off the bwide," said Gussie, raising his stick a little higher than before.

He had no intention of carrying out his threat, however.

It was merely guff.

"You'll get thwown off yaw ownself, maw likely," said Chollie.

He was as much afraid as Gussie was.

He had to make a show of being brave, however.

His girl was looking at him, and it would never do to flunk at such a moment.

"Oh!" shrieked the two girls.

They thought sure there was going to be a fight.

They need not have distressed themselves. Nothing was further from the minds of the two dudes.

"Aw you going back?" asked Gussie, after a long pause.

"No. Go back yawself."

"Yaw an obstinate pig!"

"Yaw no gentleman!"

"Yaw a liah!"

That settled it.

That was fighting talk, and there could be no back-down now.

The two dudes came together with a crash like that of two belligerent billy goats, two cantankerous cats, or two contending armies.

Well, and what then?

Much.

## PART V.

**C**HOLLIE SMITH and Gussie Robinson stood facing each other in the middle of a foot-bridge over a muddy creek.

Each had his girl with him, and each wanted to cross first.

Neither would give way to the other, and a wordy war ensued.

It had lasted several minutes, with no apparent prospect of its ending, when one of the dudes called the other no gentleman, and was denominated a liar in return.

Then came the tug of war.

The two dudes rushed together and clinched.

There was a brief struggle, and then—

Well, and then there was a splash, followed by a series of shrieks from the bank.

When the bubbles on the muddy surface of the creek had floated away, two dudes were seen standing up to their high collars in the middle of the brook.

The girls had to laugh, of course.

Did you ever see a girl who wouldn't laugh under the circumstances?

Not many.

They fairly shrieked.

It was a wonder they did not shake themselves off into the water.

And there stood Chollie and Gussie up to their necks in that muddy water, looking the picture of distress.

"Oh, Susie, don't they look too funny for anything?"

"He! he! he! I should say they did!"

Then those two girls laughed again till the woods fairly rang with their hilariousness.

"You hawid wetch, you pushed me off the bwide," said Chollie.

"You vulgah fellah, I did not. It was you that pushed me."

"Oh, Susie, as if it made any difference who pushed when they are both in the water. Oh, dear! I shall die, I know I shall."

"So shall I. If anybody should see them, wouldn't it be too awful?"

"Yes."

And then they both giggled and ran off in opposite directions.

That was rough on the two dudes.

They not only had tumbled into the water, but their girls had forsaken them.

"Guyls aw no good," muttered Chollie.

"Yaws isn't," returned Gussie. "She lawfed awful loud, and that's howidly vulgah."

"She's no maw vulgah than yaws, fellah!" cried Chollie.

"Yaw a vulgah pawson, and I shawn't speak to you any maw," retorted Gussie.

Then they proceeded to get out of the water.

That was not so easy.

There was as much mud as there was water, and it was the stickiest kind at that.

When Gussie or Chollie lifted one foot out of the mud the other stuck fast, and when they put down the first and tried to move the second then the first got in trouble.

Of course neither dude would help the other or suggest any means of improving the condition of affairs.

Gussie talked at Chollie and *vice versa*, but neither spoke directly to the other.

"If that hawid fellah hadn't been so fwesh I wouldn't have been heah," remarked Chollie to the swaying trees.

"That vulgah Smith fellah is always awound when he isn't wanted," observed Gussie, addressing his complaint to the clouds.

Thus they floundered on, sputtering and

gassing at each other, and having no end of a good time.

"He'll have to buy me a new suit of clothes," declared Gussie, to the brook, "faw these am just wined."

"If that hawid baw don't get me anothah paiah of twousahs," confided Chollie to the bushes on the bank, "I'll send the bill in to him, baw Jove."

Step by step the two dudes made their way to the bank, and at last emerged from the water at the same time.

What a looking pair of chromos they were!

They were mud to the knees.

Dirty water ran off them in rivulets.

They sat down and glared at each other across the stream.

At that distance they could say anything they chose.

"Yaw a stupid donkey, so theah!"

"Yaw a mutton-head!"

"Yaw a wegulah bum!"

"Yaw a howid—"

"Yaw anothah, whatever it is!"

"I shawn't speak to you again!"

"I'd wathah you wouldn't!"

"Yaw no good!"

"Ha! you can talk vewy loud now, but you wouldn't if I was ovah theah."

"Bah, go soak yaw head, Wags!"

"Go soak yaw own, Junk."

The sound of voices and laughter was now heard, and the dudes suspected that the girls were returning and bringing a lot more with them.

They both made tracks, and in a hurry, too. By a strange fatality they both blundered in the same direction.

They wanted to get away and they went somewhere without thinking where.

They both started to cross the bridge.

They met in the middle as before.

Then each was struck with the same idea.

They really had no desire to cross the bridge.

Perhaps the recollections of their late troubles had something to do with this.

At any rate they turned their backs on each other in a jiffy and dashed off that bridge so quick that their coat-tails were horizontal.

Then they rushed into the woods on either side as the boys and girls came in sight.

"Where are the dudes?" asked Tom.

"We've lost the fun of seeing them drown," added Ned.

"Too bad!" cried the gang.

"Poor dudes!" said Tom.

Chollie and Gussie did not stop to hear any more, but got out of those woods by circuitous routes and went back to town sadder but just as foolish as ever.

They did not want any more picnics in theirs, for one dose of that sort was sufficient.

They had to sneak home by way of the back streets, too, for they were two sights, and all the dogs in town, to say nothing of the small boys, would have been after them if they had made their appearance on the crowded thoroughfare looking as they did.

Chollie got in without being observed, but Gussie was not so fortunate.

Mrs. Hatchett, the lady who boarded him, was sitting in her front parlor when he opened the gate.

She heard the gate click as Gussie closed it behind him, and she at once thought of visitors.

"Wonder who it can be?" she mused, peeking through the blinds. "If it's only Anna Maria Higgins, next door, I needn't bother 'bout changing my frock; but if it's the minister's wife, I donno but— Oh! Lord, it's a tramp!"

With that, the good Mrs. Hatchett, having caught sight of Gussie, jumped up, gave a yell and hurried out to the rear regions.

"Take him, Boze!" she remarked to a big, fat, ugly looking brindle bull pup lying on the back door step.

Boze needed no second invitation, but flew around the side of the house as though eating up tramps were an every-day affair with him.

He knew Gussie and was on good terms with him, but just now he had no time to recognize a friend.

Around the house he bounced and ran plump into the dude as the latter reached the stoop.

Down went the slim like a hodful of bricks, with Boze on top, growling like a good one.

That purp laid hold on the back door of the dude's trousers and held on for all he knew how.

He included some of the dude's meat in his grip, but that did not matter.



"Ow-ow! let go, you hawid dawg," cried Gussie, trying to get up.

The horrid dog held on, however, and growled terribly, without letting go his grip.

"Let go, Boze, that's a good fellah," said Gussie, trying persuasion when threats had failed.

Boze was not moved by persuasion, however, but held on.

Every time Gussie tried to rise, he would shake that dude, fore and aft, and growl.

Out came Mrs. Hatchett with a big broom. She was followed by the cook with a shovel. Likewise by the chambermaid with a club. Also by the laundress with a pail of water. And lastly by the colored boy with an ax.

General surprise all around.

"Why, Mr. Robinson!"

"Good gracious! Was it you?"

"Oh, my! if it ain't the dude!"

"Bress my soul! might ha' killed dat dandy fo' suah."

"Yas, it's me," remarked Gussie.

"How came you to come home looking like that?" asked Mrs. Hatchett.

"I fell in the bwook," sobbed Gussie.

Then all hands laughed.

"Girls," said the landlady, sternly, "go back to your work."

They went and Gussie went up-stairs to his room, but not until the lady of the hash-house, careful housekeeper that she was, had made

Katie Howell, as the dude assisted her to get in.

"As gentle as yourself," said Chollie, gallantly, and Katie's cheeks vied with the color of her ribbons, which were a particularly brilliant red.

She did not feel offended at this little bit of taffy, however, but plumped her one hundred and forty pounds of loveliness down in a corner, stuck a piece of chewing-gum in her mouth, and settled herself for a good time.

"Get ap!" said Chollie, speaking in true horsey style.

But the horse refused to either get ap or up, or on, or anything but stand still.

"Get ap," said Chollie once more, slapping the reins on the nag's back.



There was a splash, followed by a series of shrieks from the bank. When the bubbles on the muddy surface of the creek had floated away, two dudes were seen standing up to their high collars in the middle of the brook.

"Hold him, Boze!" screamed the landlady.

"Let me get at him," cried the cook.

"Let me hit him," squealed the chambermaid.

"I'll drown him!" remarked the laundress.

"I'll pa'lyze him," suggested the coon.

Then Mrs. Hatchett swooped down upon Gussie with the broom.

If she had not aimed at the dude she would not have hit the dog.

Such was the fact, however.

The cook made the same mistake, and tried to shovel up the purp.

The laundress was impartial, however, and deluged both dude and dog.

Then Boze got a crack on the head with the chambermaid's club.

There is no knowing what the colored boy and his ax might have done, for just then there was a cessation of hostilities.

Boze, getting tired of being a target for all hands to fire at, let go of Gussie and retired.

Then the dude got up, dripping wet for the second time that day, and faced his assailants.

"I don't see what I've done to be tweeked so," he blabbered.

him remove his shoes so as not to soil her lovely rag carpets.

Of course Gussie laid all his misfortunes to his rival, Chollie Smith, and resolved that he would never even notice that vulgar person again.

Several days now passed and things went along swimmingly—the dudes' horizons being unclouded.

On a pleasant Saturday afternoon Mr. Griggs, having gone to town and the office being shut up for the day, Chollie Smith concluded to take his girl out for a drive.

Buggies came cheap in Hunterdon, or Chollie could never have obtained one, his supply of money being even more limited than his brains.

He had been saving up for the occasion, however, and had intimated to his girl, not his best one, for she had shaken him after the picnic, that he would be pleased to have her go out with him the next day.

She accepted with alacrity, and was all ready and dressed to kill when Chollie drove up to the house in the afternoon following.

The turnout wasn't a bad one for a small town like Hunterdon, and Chollie felt proud enough as he sat there handling the ribbons.

"Is the horse gentle, Mr. Smith?" asked

Then Katie took time enough from her chewing gum to observe:

"Why, um-um, Mr. Smith, um-um, you haven't um-um, unhitched him yet, um-um-smack-te-he-he-um-um."

"Why, so I haven't, baw Jove, ain't that funny?" and Chollie, blushing like a poppy, had to get out, unhitch the check-rein and resume his seat before he could go ahead.

"This is a lovely um-um day, don't you um-um-smack, think so, Mr. um-um Smith!" asked Katie.

"As lovely as yawself," answered the dude, who was dead stuck on that one retort and couldn't think of any other.

"Oh, um-um-um, Mr. Smith!" gurgled Katie, attacking her gum with increased violence.

"The trees look beautifully um-um green, don't they, Mr. um-um-um Smith?" was Katie's next question.

"Yas, as gween as—" then Chollie choked, "as gween as gween, baw Jove," he went on, turning pale at the awful danger he had escaped.

Katie Howell champed and smacked and gummed away at that gum for about five minutes before she said another word.



A girl that can keep still for five consecutive minutes must have something on her mind.

That's what Katie had, and she had not yet decided if Chollie Smith had really intended to call her green, or had made a mere slip of the tongue, when something happened.

They were on a narrow country road up in the hills back of the town, where there was room but for one carriage at a time.

The arching trees shut out the view ahead, and their own serious thoughts had prevented the two giddies from hearing anything.

The horse suddenly stopped, and then Chollie looked up.

In front of him was another horse, another buggy, and another pair of spoons.

Gussie Robinson had invited his Saturday girl, Miss Frankie Freshette, to take a drive with him.

He had left town by one route and Chollie by another, and now they had met on the narrow country road.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish.

Neither of those dudes knew enough to turn out in such a spot without upsetting.

Both were obstinate enough not to give way for the other.

So there they sat giving each other glances which were enough to sour all the milk in the country.

Neither wanted to speak, but both had to do so.

"Tawn out and give me the woad, fellah!" commanded Chollie.

"Tawn out yawself, noodle, and let me pahss."

"I've as much wight to the woad as you have, donkey!"

"You haven't any maw, idiot!"

It was the pot calling the kettle black, with a vengeance.

"Oh, dear!" cried Katie, dropping her chewing gum, "they're going to fight!"

"Gussie Robinson, if you fight, I'll never speak to you again!" screamed Frankie, nearly letting her crimps fall off.

She need not have distressed herself.

The two dudes had no intention of fighting. There they sat glaring at one another like a pair of angry tom-cats on a fence.

"Aw you going to tawn out?"

"No, of course not."

"I want hawf of the woad."

"It's all you can have."

"Well, I want it out of the middle, don't ye know?"

That was the nearest that Chollie ever came to making a joke.

Gussie could see nothing funny in it, however.

"Take the ditch, if you like," he said. "I won't tawn out faw any such vulgah pawson as you."

Take the ditch indeed!

The instant Katie heard that she yelled at the topmost note of her high voice:

"Lemme get out, lemme get out, I won't have my neck broke for nobody, lemme get out!"

Frankie was as much scared as Katie, but she didn't make as much of a circus over it.

She jumped out of that buggy quicker than seat.

"Now upset your old wagon if you like," she sputtered, "but you can't upset it with me in it. Ther's no need of that fat thing getting out."

By this term Katie Howell was meant, and she didn't like it.

"Fat thing yourself!" she retorted, as she hopped out. "I guess I ain't any fatter than some other folks. I wouldn't be all skin and bones anyhow."

The quarrel promised to be a four-handed one before long.

"Pawhaps I had bettah back and tawn wound," suggested Chollie.

"Wouldn't it be bettah to take down a wail and dwive into the woods?" asked Gussie.

They addressed their girls of course, and not each other.

The girls were as pig-headed now as the dudes had been.

"Retreat from that horrid, old, freckled thing, Frankie Freshette? Well, I guess not."

"Turn out into the woods so that that Jumbo and her monkey can drive past us? What are you thinking of?"

"But my deah Miss Howell!"

"But considah the wisk."

"You stay just where you are, Mr. Smith."

"Don't you stir a peg for them, Gussie Robinson!"

The situation was becoming interesting.

It greatly resembled a deadlock in a political

caucus, for it had as little sense and as much obstinacy.

"We cahn't stay heah all night, you know," said Chollie, at length.

"We can stay as long as they can, I guess," and Katie prodded a piece of gum off a tree and stowed it away in her mouth.

She could hang out as long as any one now.

"Don't you think we'd bettah twy to get by in some mannah?" asked Gussie, after a long pause.

"Drive over them if you want to, but don't turn out. If they weren't so hateful they'd give us the road."

"Mm-um-um—hateful yourself, Frankie—um-um—Freshette—um-um—smack!" returned Katie, chewing away for dear life.

"Oh, deah, what shall we do?" sighed both dudes.

An hour passed on and the deadlock continued.

Then voices were heard.

Presently Tom Trust and Ed New appeared, each with a bag of walnuts on his shoulder.

The boys took in the situation in a jiffy.

They exchanged a few hurried words, and then became the bitter enemies that they always were when the dudes were about.

"What's the matter, Chollie, old fellow?"

"Got into difficulty, have you, Gus?"

"Aw, Tom, deah boy, glad to see you! That fellah won't tawn out."

"Ned, old chappie, you nevah saw such an obstinate fellah as that Smith. He won't tawn out."

"I'll make him turn out if you'll let me get in a minute."

"Just let me handle the trap and I'll see if he won't turn out."

The dudes got out and the boys got in, the young ladies then taking to the banks.

Both the boys understood horses, and although it was no fool of a job to pass each other at that place, they succeeded in doing it.

"Now then, Miss Howell," said Tom, "if you will get in I will give the reins to Mr. Smith."

"Help your lady in, Gus, and then I'll get out."

The two dudes were glad enough to get out of the scrape so easily.

They helped their girls in with the greatest pleasure in life.

They were not prepared for what followed, though.

The moment Tom and Ned had those respective girls seated by their respective sides they just put the lash to their respective horses, and dashed off in their respective directions as fast as possible.

And what about the dudes?

Well, they were left.

That's all.

## PART VI.

CHOLLIE SMITH and Gussie Robinson were badly left.

They had intrusted their buggies to Tom Trust and Ned New to get them out of a tangle in a narrow road.

The boys had done so, and had then taken in the girls and the dudes also.

The dudes were taken in somewhat differently, however.

The girls were taken in and driven off, but the dudes were taken in and done for.

In other words they were left.

The boys had carried off their girls and their buggies, and there they were on a lonely road, three or four miles from home, and evening coming on.

They looked at each other sadly when the sound of wheels had died away, but said never a word.

They were not on friendly terms with each other, and so, although each needed sympathy neither could give it.

Finally they did speak, but only to accuse each other.

"You howid fellah; it's all yaw fault!"

"If you hadn't come awound, you wude cweachaw, I'd be all wight."

"Why couldn't you tawn out?"

"You might have backed down."

"Don't speak to me, you old fwaud!"

"Yaw not worth noticing, you bwute!"

"Yab!"

"Bah!"

Then they turned their backs on one another, and started off for the town in different directions.

The boys in the meantime had a jolly drive, and the girls enjoyed it much better than if the two dudes had been along.

The livery men had both taken their pay for the rigs before they intrusted them to Chollie and Gussie, as it would never do in the world to trust those two slims for anything, if it wasn't more than a stick of candy.

That made it all right for Tom and Ned, and all they had to do was to take the girls home, and then drive around to the stable and leave their teams.

They met on the street shortly after this and exchanged congratulations.

"Had a good ride?"

"Bet your boots."

"Seen anything of Chollie?"

"Not a thing. Seen Gussie?"

"Nixey Gus."

"Let's waltz."

"Mope it is. Come along."

When Gussie left Chollie, he went on through the woods feeling as sad as sadness and mad in the bargain.

He promised himself to do all sorts of things to Chollie Smith, and was engaged in an earnest conversation with himself when a shadow suddenly fell across the road.

The shadow was big and so was the fellow that made it, and, moreover, he was a bad man.

"Hallo, young feller, where yer going?"

Gussie looked up and beheld a seedy-looking tramp, with a bundle on a stick over his shoulder, a battered hat, and an evil eye.

"Going home, don't you know," said the dude, trying to pass by on one side.

The tramp wouldn't have it.

He desired Gussie's conversation, to say nothing of his clothes.

"Hold on, young feller, I wantar talk to you."

"I haven't got time, weally I haven't," stammered the dude.

"Oh, yes, yer have," and the tramp caught the dude by the arm.

"Well, then, be quick, faw I'm in an awful hurry myself."

"No, you ain't, you've got lots o' time, old feller. Sit down."

Then that tramp gave Gussie's arm a sudden twist and sat him down in the dust like a flash.

After this he took a seat himself—right across the dude's chest.

"Shell out, young feller," he said, proceeding to do the shelling without Gussie's help, however.

He went through that dude's clothes with neatness and dispatch.

Thirty-one cents in money, half a package of cigarettes, two matches, a piece of chewing gum, a scented handkerchief and the picture of an actress in short skirts was the result of his search.

"That all you got?" he muttered. "What business you got to go around with good togs and no money in 'em?"

"I haven't been to the bank to-day, old chappie."

This struck the tramp as very funny.

"Neither have I, old pal. Ain't that queer? Ho-ho-ho, never saw anything so deuced odd."

"Yas, vewy queah, isn't it, he-he."

"Shut up!" and the tramp transferred his seat to the dude's stomach with a bounce.

Gussie gasped and choked, and then shut up.

"Get up," said the tramp. "I think them togs o' yours will fit me."

Poor Gussie failed to see the humor of this last remark.

It is strange how obtuse some people are.

Up got the tramp, dragging Gussie with him.

"Peel?" he commanded, yanking the dude's coat off in a twinkling.

"I cahn't peel, ye know, old chappie. I ain't an owange."

He thought that this gem of wit might soften the tramp's heart.

It didn't soften worth mentioning.

"Now der vest," said the tramp.

Then he caught hold of one flap of the garment in question, whirled Gussie suddenly around and the vest was off.

Gussie was amazed.

He couldn't have done any such quick disrobing as that if he had tried all day.

He had hardly recovered from his dizziness when the tramp tripped up his heels and sent him sprawling over a huge log at one side of the road.

Before he could get up the tramp had sat on the end of his spine, and was busily engaged in depriving him of his checkered trousers.

Then he pulled off the dude's patent leathers despite his kicking, and then he arose.



Gussie also arose with wrath in his eye, but impotent wrath at the best.

There he stood in rainbow undergarments, woolen shirt and false bosom, for he hadn't a whole shirt, only the ends thereof.

When the tramp saw this he just laughed ready to split.

"Well, you're a healthy dude," he remarked. "Just you stand in the bushes and turn your back while I change. Ho-ho, a dude with a dickey! Well, that's the worst ever I did see."

Gussie couldn't see the fun.

On the contrary he began to cry.

"Yaw a hawid, vulgah pawson, and I want my clothes," he blubbered.

The tramp was as rapid in taking off his

"Why, Snooksy, old pard, how goes it?"

Then Gussie's tramp shook hands with the dude, and both laughed.

"Been making a haul, Bill?" asked our tramp.

"Bet yer life. Met a dude, and indooed him to gimme his clothes."

"Well, if that ain't cur'ous, Bill. I met a dude myself, and he persuaded me ter wear his things."

"Need much persuadin', Snooksy?"

"Well, no, seein' that he insisted on it, old pard."

"Meet a wagon, Snooksy?"

"Yes, did you?"

"Sure."

"Which way did your dude go?"

Think of their elegant togs being turned into song-and-dance suits!

"Bill, old pard, how much cash did you realize?"

"Twenty-two cents."

"I beat you by a dime. Got any smokers?"

"Cigarettes."

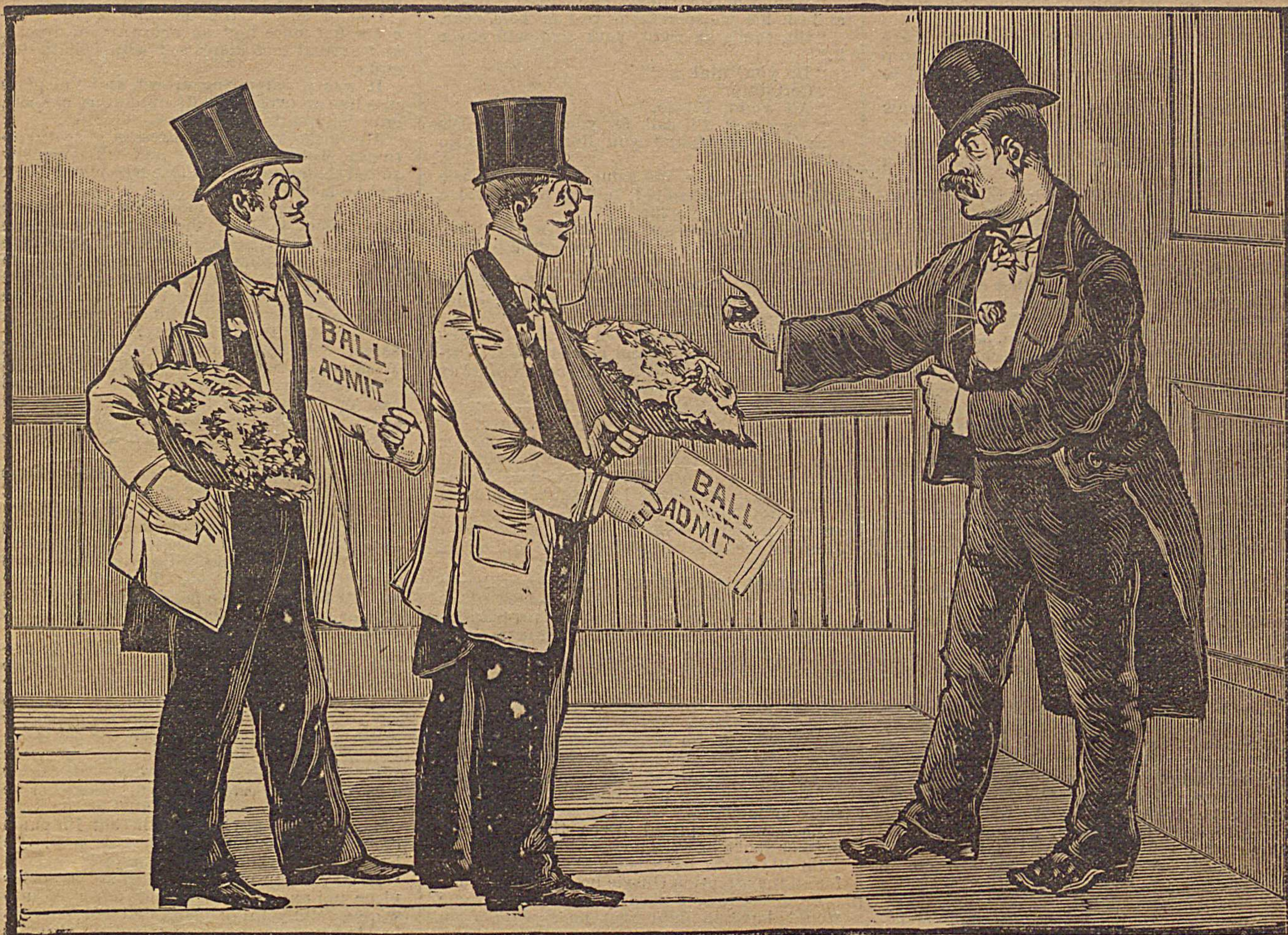
"Same here."

"Let's travel. Things is too dull."

Then they traveled, going over the fields so as to cut into a road that led away from Hunterdon.

That town would be altogether too warm for them just now, and so they avoided it.

That's all we have to do with Bill Stumps and Snooksy, and we will therefore return to our dudes.



"Show yer tickets, gents. No bloke admitted widout a ticket. Come on dere, slims. Where's yer tickets? Show dem or get out of der way. When I spit on me hands I mean business. Show yer tickets or I'll spit now."

own things as he was in disembarassing Gussie of his.

In two shakes he had on the dude's togs and threw his own to Gussie.

"Guess I won't wait to see how yer look in 'em," he remarked, appropriating the dude's Derby. "Ta-ta, old chappie; meet you at the ball."

Then he took two cigarettes, stuck one in each corner of his mouth, lighted both and went on his way rejoicing.

Poor Gus had to put on the duds that were left or go into town in his undergarments and, as a lesser evil, he chose the former.

That bold highwayman of a tramp went his way, and half an hour later saw another dude approaching.

"It rains dudes to-day," he observed. "Sorry I can't clean this feller out. Maybe he's got some chink, though, and if he has, it's mine."

Presently the dude came up and looked fixedly at the transformed tramp.

Then both spoke at once, and in the same words:

"Say, young feller, got any sugar in yer togs?"

Then they both looked at each other again.

"Well, I'll be blowed!"

"Shoot me if I'd knowed."

"If it ain't Bill Stumps!"

"Back."

"And mine went t'other way."

Then both tramps, for such they were, the pair of them, exchanged expressive glances.

"Billy, my boy!"

"Well, Snooksy, old pal?"

"Them wagons and them dudes is both going to town."

"So they are."

"If you and me keeps going the way we are we'll get there, too."

"Right you are; and we'll meet the folks coming to scort us to the lock-up."

"Let's go cross lots, Bill."

"Cross lots it is, Snooksy."

"Don't we make two dandies, Bill, my boy!"

"Bet yer life, Snooks."

"Funny that we both met dudes."

"Best joke of the season."

"Let's go on the stoyge and do an act."

"Mulready brothers, hey, Snooks?"

"That's the card. Shake!"

They shook and swapped winks.

Wouldn't the two dudes have been mad enough if they could have seen this little interlude?

It was bad enough to be robbed of their clothes, without having the latter being made fun of.

They struck the town at the same time, and met each other on a back street.

They looked at each other and tumbled.

Each knew that the other had met with an experience similar to his own.

Each rejoiced thereat, and blamed the other for what had happened.

"Sawves you wight faw not tawning out."

"You always was a wegulah old twamp, anyhow."

"Don't you daw speak to me, saw."

"It isn't any cweedit to me, I know."

"Wats!"

"Whiskahs!"

Then both dusted, for a couple of constables were coming, and they did not want to be taken up on suspicion.

Gussie got away, but Chollie was nipped.

Despite his protests he was run in.

It took him an hour to explain matters and prove his identity.

Then when he finally got away he was late for supper, and Mrs. Baker wouldn't give him anything to eat unless he took it in the kitchen.

"It's all that fellah Wobinson's fault," he mused, as he devoured his cold hash. "He ought to be wun out of town, baw Jove."

"Sawved that Smith pawson just wight," observed Gussie, in thinking over the affair. "He's all the time getting me in twouble."



The next day Chollie met Tom Trust and said in an aggrieved tone:

"Tom, deah boy, what made you wun away with my hawse?"

"I didn't, old fellow, I ran away with Gussie's, so that he would have to walk."

"No, deah boy, you went away with mine."

"Is that so?" asked Tom, with all the innocence of a cherub. "Why, I thought sure it was Robinson's."

"No, it was mine," said Chollie, sadly.

"Why, that's too bad, really. You don't suppose I would do it on purpose, do you, old man?"

"Of course not," answered the dude, although he had his doubts on that subject.

Gussie took Ned to task for having gone back on him, but the young fellow was equal to the occasion.

"Why, old boy, I didn't run away, the horse wouldn't stop for me, and then I met a tramp and your girl was frightened, and I had to keep right on."

"Weally, old chappie, I thought you waw playing woots on me, don't ye know."

"Roots, Gus! Oh, no. You have roots enough in the store without my giving you any more."

"Well, I'm glad you didn't, old chappie, faw that would be awfully mean, don't ye know."

"Oh, terribly mean."

It wasn't so very long after this that Tom and Ned put their heads together and got up a combination snap on the two dudes.

There was an association of toughs over at the further end of Hunterdon, a mile or so from the center, called the Gaslight Coterie.

Most of them worked in the gas-house situated over that way, and hence the name.

The Gaslights gave a grand ball now and then, and one of these occasions was about to evenuate.

Jimmy Jones, a tough from Awayback, was the leader of the Gaslights, master of ceremonies, head bouncer and chief slugger, and when he spat on his hands it meant business.

The boys knew Jimmy, for he had worked around the Academy, and had received several slight favors at their hands.

He had given Tom points when that young gentleman turned out the gas one night in the Academy and broke up a school meeting, and he had told Ned how to doctor the keys, so that they could not be turned, on another occasion.

The boys had paid him well for these little tips, and they knew that he would be ready to help them again.

When the posters for the Gaslight ball were out Tom went to Jimmy and said:

"Jonesy, old man, I want a couple of tickets for the Gaslight ball next week."

"All right, me hearty, ye kin have 'em. Dey ain't no flies on me. I'm a friend of yours, I am. Yer never see me spit on me hands when you was around, did yer?"

"No."

"Course not. When I spit on me hands it means a fight. I never spit on me hands for you."

"That's right; don't do it."

"Course I won't. So yer comin' to der ball, are yer?"

"No, but I want to send a couple of dudes along."

"Dudes among der Gaslights," said Jimmy, elevating his nose. "When dem dudes come in, if yer don't see me spit on me hands, I'm a chump."

"That's what I want you to do."

"Are der dudes friends of yours, my dear?"

"No, but I want to play roots on them."

"Den send on der dudes, and I'll spit on me hands der fust t'ing."

"Don't hurt 'em, Jimmy. Just have fun with 'em."

"Oh, you bet yer life me and der boys'll have a picnic. Here's der cards, sonny. Just you send dem dudes ter me."

"Oh, we will."

"Give me some tip so dat I'll know 'em, my son."

"I will. I'll tell 'em to carry big bunches of flowers."

"Dat's der talk. Whoever saw a Gaslight wid a bokay in his fist? Der boys'll paralyze 'em as soon as dey catch on."

"Oh, you mustn't let 'em. Give the dudes a chance to mash a little."

"And den we'll do the mashin'. Oh, Gawge! Are yer goin' out to-night, Birdie? Send on der dudes right away."

"We'll let you know about it later, Jimmy."

"Is yer chum in dis ting?"

"Yes."

"Den it'll be a hummer."

Tom gave one of the tickets to Ned, and then the racket was ready.

The very day of the ball, Tom went to Chollie and said:

"Chollie, will you go to the Gaslight ball if I give you a ticket?"

"Isn't it wathah low, deah boy?"

"Low! Not at all. That's an erroneous impression. All the elite attend."

"You sawpwise me."

"Fact, I assure you. Come ahead. I've got a ticket."

"Full dwess?"

"Certainly."

"Well, you see, deah boy, I've got—"

and Chollie whispered the rest in Tom's ear.

"Oh, that's all right, your coat will cover it."

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly."

"All wight, I'll go."

"Very well, I'll call for you at nine. It's tony, you know, and you don't want to go too early."

Ned New made the same offer to Gussie and the latter accepted, telling his friend a secret at the same time.

The secret concerned the dude's wardrobe, but Ned assured him that that could be very easily fixed.

So it was settled and the two dudes went to the ball, each being unaware that the other was going.

The boys managed to see Jimmy Jones before the thing started, and posted him regarding certain matters which will be given away later on.

Jimmy was at the door taking tickets, so that nobody but the initiated might enter.

He wore a dress coat two sizes too big for him, his shirt front was liberally sprinkled with tobacco juice and he had an Alaska diamond that looked like a locomotive headlight.

Cerberus himself could not have kept a stricter watch over the gates of Tartarus than Jimmy Jones did at the entrance to the ball room.

He stood right in front of the door with one hand extended and the other doubled up at his side, so as to take a ticket or smash an intruder, as the occasion might warrant.

He had let in a number of the Gaslights, when Chollie and Gussie suddenly appeared.

These dudes were just gotten up to exterminate, and no discrepancy.

They wore high dicers, light colored overcoats, beneath the skirts of which the tails of their dress coats showed for several inches, and carried bouquets as big as bushel baskets.

As it happened, they both arrived at the same moment.

Each was surprised to see the other, but neither spoke or even noticed his rival.

Chollie might have been forty miles away for all the attention Gussie bestowed on him.

From the vacant stare on Chollie's face one would have thought that he saw only an empty space in the place where Gussie stood.

"I wondah how that fellah got heah. He doesn't belong in sawciety."

"That Smith pawson here. Weckon he must have stolen his ticket."

Both dudes advanced, holding a huge bit of pasteboard in one hand and a mammoth bouquet in the other.

Jimmy Jones was onto them in a second.

"Tickets, gents," he yelled, pursing up his lips and making his big shoebrush mustache stick straight out. "Yer can't get into dis ball if yer haven't got yer tickets."

That was enough to scare the dudes away, but neither would flinch while the other was present.

"Show yer tickets, gents. No bloke admitted widout a ticket. Come on dere, slims. Where's yer tickets? Show dem or get out of der way. When I spit on me hands I mean business. Show yer tickets or I'll spit now."

The dudes trembled, but they were in for it now and could not back out.

"Dat's all right," said Jimmy, as he took the two pasteboards. "Pass right in. Der dressin' room is on der left."

Then he gave the closed door a kick and it was opened by some one inside.

Chollie and Gussie went through and found themselves in an ante-room where a lot of tough nuts had already gathered.

"If that hawid fellah Wobinson wasn't heah, I'd get out," thought Chollie.

"If it wasn't faw letting that Smith ewechaw see that I am afwaid, I'd skip wight away," groaned Gussie.

Well, they were in the ball-room at last. How would they get out? That's telling.

## PART VII.

THE grand annual ball of the Gaslight Coterie was in full swing. All the gas-house toughs were there with their best girls.

Three wax candles had been used up in giving the floor the proper slip, and when one of the Gaslights fell down everybody knew it.

Three fiddlers, a cornetist, a harpist and a thumper of ivory had been engaged and were now knocking the nonsense out of waltzes, quadrilles and galops in rapid succession.

One or two of the Gaslights wore dress-coats, but more had on cutaways or frocks, and several had dispensed with collars and cuffs.

It was a perspiring crowd, and the place was like an oven, with its numerous gas-jets, crowded quarters and closed windows.

The girls wore party dresses, street costumes, Mother Hubbards and whatever else suited their fancy, and those who could dance had no lack of partners.

Jimmy Jones was moving around among the dancers, keeping the frisky toughs from getting too hilarious, admonishing the girls not to make too much noise, finding partners for bashful men, or putting homely girls, who could not get a chance to dance, into the hands of men who did not dare protest.

"Yer want ter dance, hey?" he would observe. "Well, why der dooce don't yer, den? What yer scared of? D'yer tink the ladies is goin' ter eat yer? Why don't yer step up and ask 'em? Dis ain't no bashful crowd, dis ain't. You make me sick. Fer two pins I'd spit on me hands, and when I spit on me hands I mean biz!"

"See dat gal in der yaller dress and der green ribbons? I'll give you an interduck to her. Whaat! Not good lookin' enough? See here, young feller, none o' yer guff. Dat's my sister and yer gotter dance wid her or get fired out. Which'll yer take? Oh, yer'll dance wid her? Well, I thought so. Two seconds more and I'd ha' spit on me hands, and when I do dat yer kin smell blood. Come on up and get yer pardner."

"Take yer pardners for der gallop. No funny bizness, gents. Dem dat can't dance has gotter keep off der floor. No bumpin' either, and don't yer fergit to recollect it. Der bloke dat knocks anoder bloke down a puppus has gotter knock me down. Take yer pardners! Let her go, old Sheroot, and play up lively. We don't want no dead marches. Dis here is a gallop. No speelers allowed. Shake her up, gents. Some of dese ladies ain't got no pardners. If I see anybody gettin' left I'll punch der snoot of der fust feller wot does it. Let her go! Everybody fer der gallop!"

It may easily be supposed that in such a place and among such a crowd our two dudes were woefully out of place, and felt like cats in strange garrets or diamond pins among brickbats, or mice in a company of cats.

They did not dare to refuse to dance for fear of being everlastingly slugged, and if it had not been for the frown and the protecting arm of Jimmy Jones, they would have been a dozen times in five minutes.

"Dem young fellers has paid to come to der ball and dey are my friends," he announced to several toughs who wanted to lick the dudes, "and if anybody sasses dem dey sasse me. If I see any of yer lookin' crooked at dem dudes I'll spit on me hands, so I will, and yer know what dat means and don't yer forgit it. No funny business now."

However, Jimmy intended to work the racket on the two dudes, all the same, but he preferred to wait and not frighten the game away too soon, as might easily have happened.

Chollie and Gussie danced with every lady that they were introduced to and would have enjoyed the thing if they hadn't been frightened out of their wits by the presence of so many tough citizens of both sexes.

At the end of an hour, Jimmy Jones decided to work the little gag which Tom and Ned had put him up to.

Chollie was dancing with a red-headed girl weighing fifty pounds more than he did, while Gussie was in the same set, and had a faded beauty of fifty, in a white flannel dress, bare arms and a false front, for a partner.

Chollie stepped on the old maid's foot and Gussie detached a ribbon from the red-headed girl's dress, all by accident of course.

However, both ladies were mad, and there



was no end of a row at once, all hands threatening to smash the dudes and fire them out.

"We don't want no dudes, anyhow. How did dey get into der ball I'd like ter know? Dey don't belong to der gang."

"Dey're only waiters in a hash house, anyhow. Get on to der funny coats. None of der gang wears coats like dat!"

Then Jimmy Jones came up, grabbed hold of Gussie, and said angrily:

"Look here, young feller, I believe yer a snide. You ain't got no business on dis floor. Fer two pins I'd spit on me hands and chuck yer out der winder. Yer nuthin' but a dude, and I don't believe you've get der price of a beer on yer clothes."

Gussie shook like a leaf, and if Jimmy Jones

revealed two big, white patches on the seat of his trousers, which the tails had hitherto concealed.

When Gussie took off his coat the big linen cuffs, fastened with immense studs, came with it, and when the vest was removed other revelations were made.

Gussie wore a false shirt bosom, and that and the collar and cuffs were all he had in the nature of a white shirt.

He wore a woollen undergarment, with short sleeves, the expansive bosom, high collar and flaring cuffs being shams, and put on with the avowed intention of deceiving.

When Chollie stood on his head, and Gussie was obliged to stand with his coat in one

and amid hootings, and cat calls, and derisive groans, the two dudes were allowed to leave the ball-room.

If Jimmy Jones had allowed them, the Gaslights would have thumped the daylight out of the dudes, but it was in the contract that they must not be hurt, and they accordingly escaped without a scratch.

They put on their tall dicers and light overcoats and faded away as silently as possible and with no unnecessary ostentation.

The Gaslights wanted to at least throw them down-stairs to show their disapprobation of such deceitful conduct.

They promised not to hurt the dudes provided they were allowed to throw them out the window or down-stairs.



Chollie's coat-tails, falling around his neck, revealed two big, white patches on the seat of his trousers, which the tails had hitherto concealed. When Gussie took off his coat the big linen cuffs, fastened with immense studs, came with it, and when the vest was removed other revelations were made.

had not held on to him, would have fallen down.

"Get hold of der oder one, Tommy," said Jimmy Jones to one of the floor managers, "and we'll take 'em up on der platform and see what dey're made of."

Neither Chollie nor Gussie dared to say a word.

They wished a hundred times that they were out of that, however.

At one end of the room was a platform raised a few feet from the floor, and this was where the musicians sat.

Dragging the victims after them, Jimmy Jones and the floor manager ascended the platform and stood up in full view of everybody in the room.

"Stand your feller on his head and see what he's got in his pockets, Tommy. Now den, young feller, off wid yer coat and vest and don't let's have no foolin'."

Tommy upset Chollie Smith in a twinkling, standing him on his head with his back to the crowd and holding him up by his feet.

At the same time Jimmy Jones made Gussie Robinson divest himself of his coat and waistcoat.

What a transformation.

Chollie's coat-tails, falling around his neck,

hand, and his dickey in the other, there was a howl.

Poor dudes.

"I knowed dey was skins," said Jimmy. "Patches on his pants, and not a whole white shirt to his back! What kind of dudes do you call dem?"

The patches and the dickey comprised the secrets which the two dudes had confided to Tom and Ned, and which the latter had wickedly and with malice aforethought, basely given away to Jimmy Jones.

Hence this *expose* which Jimmy considered the best joke of the season.

"Nice fellers dey are to come to a ball, ain't dey. None of us has patches on our pants, and we kin afford to wear hull shirts even if we don't show a square yard o' buzzum."

"Fire der doods out!"

"Chuck 'em down here and let's walk on 'em!"

"Fill 'em full o' benzine and touch a match to dem!"

"Punch der snoots of der snoozers!"

"Let her go, Tommy," said the boss of the Gaslights, and Chollie Smith was allowed to stand on his feet looking very red in the face and ready to cry at the first warning.

Then Gussie was allowed to put on his coat,

To this modest request of the members of the Gaslight Coterie, Jimmy Jones gave a firm but polite negative.

"You'll trow nothin' down der stairs," he remarked, "and dat's what I'm givin' yer. D'yer want me ter spit on me hands?"

Tommy replied that if spitting on them would wash them, they certainly needed it.

Jimmy Jones was grieved.

"Dat's enough fer you, Tommy," he sadly remarked. "You an' I was good friends. If we wasn't yer couldn't say dat much widout gettin' yer jaw busted. Never mind dat now. I kin stand it from you, but if anybody else said it, dere'd be a funeral at his house to-morrow. Der dudes ain't goin' ter be chucked out, and dat settles it."

So it did. The slims were not chucked.

They skinned out, however, during the discussion.

It was lucky that they did, for several of the Gaslights sneaked out of the ball-room during the discussion, with the intention of finding and paralyzing those same dudelets.

However, they were too late.

The birds had "flewed."

Chollie Smith had now another grievance against Gussie Robinson.



Gussie, on the other side, had an additional bone to pick with the Smith fellow.

Each had been compelled to expose the deficiencies of his personal apparel before the other.

It was enough for the toughs to know that Chollie had patched trousers, and Gussie wore dickeys instead of shirts, without Gussie and Chollie knowing these things.

Consequently each knew the other's secret, and both were mad.

Well, there was no time for quarreling now, for the terriers might come out at any moment.

The two dudes lighted out as fast as their legs could carry them, and never once stopped till they had reached their respective boarding places.

The part that Tom and Ned had played in this little farce was never revealed to the victims thereof, for Jimmy Jones gave nothing away.

Consequently the boys were free to play a new gag on the slims as soon as they chose.

They chose to do so without unnecessary delay.

In fact the next gag was ready on the following day.

The post-office was a great place of rendezvous for all the Academy boys and Seminary girls, as well as for the clerks and errand boys of Hunterdon.

At stated times it was crowded by people waiting for the mail, by girls in search of the males and by boys fond of the females.

There was a lot of mashing, open and secret, carried on in the post-office, and plenty of skylarking as well, so that at times the postmaster and his one or two assistants were driven nearly wild by the clatter of girls, boys and hobbledehoys.

There is no place in the world like a country post-office to hear and relate the newest bits of gossip and scandal, to swap news, discuss politics, ventilate your neighbors' characters, or flirt, particularly the latter.

The Hunterdon post-office was as good a sample of this sort of thing as could be found, and burning ears were numerous at times when the mails were distributed.

At three o'clock of the day following the adventure of the two dudes, the office was crowded with the usual gang of letter-seekers, and Chollie and Gussie were in the crowd.

What a lot of talking there was!

"Oh, girls, did you know that Susie Freshette is going to be married?"

"Yes, and Frankie is furious. She's the oldest."

"Yes, I don't think that the free traders have the least show at all in this State."

"I'll just tell him what I think of him the next time I see him."

"Yes, they say he's gone to Canada."

"Widd'r Jenkins has taken off her mourning, and Jenkins is only dead a year."

"Yes, the old cemetery is good enough for me. I won't be buried in the new one as long as I live, so there!"

"Them Scraggs' must be awful poor. We've sent in to borrow lots of things and they're allus out of what we want. I wouldn't be so shiftless for anything."

For the very vortex of scandal-mongering give us the country post-office at mail times.

Well, as we have said, Chollie and Gussie were there to get the letters belonging to their employers.

In the respective bundles was a letter for the dudes.

The letter was written on pink paper in a school-girl hand, and ran as follows, being the same in both cases:

"DEAREST FRIEND,—You don't know how I love you, and you never will unless you meet me to-night at twelve o'clock, under the Soldiers' Monument, in the square. Wear a sunflower in your button-hole, and ask for  
SADIE."

Both dudes thought they had a mash.

They read the letter in the office, Chollie in the right window, Gussie in the left, with their backs to each other.

Gussie osculated his pink sheet, and turned furtively to see if any one was looking.

Chollie put his downy lips to the letter he held, and blushed redder than the paper.

No, there was no one looking at them, everybody being busy reading their own letters.

"Anothah chawmah," mused Gussie. "It's stwange how all the guyls aw dead stuck on me."

"I've made a mash, be Jove!" thought Chollie at the same moment. "None of the fair sex can wesist you, deah boy."

The dudes had bitten.

The letter which they both read had been written by those bad boys, Tom and Ned, with intent to deceive.

It did that, for a fact.

Hardly had the dudes left the office to go back to business, when Jimmy Jones swaggered in, walked up to the window and asked:

"Any letters fer der gas-works?"

The clerk handed out a bundle, and Jimmy ran them over to see to whom they belonged.

The superscription, "Jimmy Jones, Esq.," on two of the letters caught his attention at once.

"Who der dooce takes der trouble ter write ter me?" he muttered.

He stuck the other letters in his pocket, inserted his thumb under the flap of the envelope, and ripped open one of the letters in a jiffy, knocking the wits out of the cover thereof.

This is what he read:

"JIMMY JONES,—You're a chump! Meet me at the Soldiers' Monument to-night, on the green, at twelve, and I'll chew your ass's ears off!

"C. SMITH."

"Well, of all der guff I ever see dat leads der string! Chew my ass ears off, hey! Dere'll be some spittin' on der hands d's evenin', and don't yer fergit it!"

Then Mr. Jimmy Jones read the second note, after tearing the envelope to bits.

It was even more violent than the first, and this is how it ran:

"Jimmy Jones is no good, and if he will meet the undersigned at the monument, at twelve, he will get his wooden head thumped off. You are a snide and a loafer. Be on hand to get the thrashing, or I will come after you and lick you before the whole gang.  
G. ROBINSON."

Now he was mad.

He spat on his hands and looked around for somebody to fight.

"I'm a chump, and a snide, and a loafer, and a no good, am I, and if I meet dem ducks I'm goin' ter git punched? Well, I guess not! Der bloke dat downs me has got ter go inter trainin' a long time before he kin do it, and I'm allus ready, and don't yer fergit it!"

Then Jimmy Jones looked at the letters again, spat on them, tore them into shreds, and threw them on the floor.

"Here, here! You mustn't do that!" cried the postmaster. "Do you think we have nothing to do but sweep up after such fellows as you?"

"Oh, go sit on der ice-box and cool off!" answered Jimmy, in a contemptuous manner.

Then, spitting on his grimy hands, he struck at an imaginary foe, and went away as mad as they make 'em.

He would be on hand at the appointed time and no failure.

"Meet 'em at der monnymment," he mused. "Dey'd better said der bone yard. Dem fellers' families'll be wearin' black to-morrer. If dey don't, den I am a chump and a no good, and I deserve ter have mud chucked at me grave stone."

Then Mr. Jimmy Jones squirted out about a half pint of tobacco juice from his capacious maw, and killed a fly on a post ten feet away, after which he sailed off, full of indignation.

It wouldn't go well with any one who looked crooked at Mr. Jimmy Jones just then.

Well, those two dudes were just tickled to death all the rest of the afternoon.

A midnight meeting was something so new and extraordinary to them that they could not think of anything else.

They had never been up later than ten o'clock, and the idea of actually being awake when the next day came around made them feel ten years older.

Gussie was so excited that he put up oxalic acid for Rochelle salts, and nearly killed an old woman who had always been a good customer of the doctor's, the overdose being the only thing that saved him.

Chollie was so up in the clouds that he forgot to receipt a bill which one of his boss's clients paid him, and the man was threatened with a suit, the next week, by old Griggs, if he didn't step up and settle at once.

At ten o'clock the two dudes dressed themselves up in their very best, and then waited for the hour to approach when they would meet their mash.

They were both pretty sleepy at eleven o'clock, and had made themselves sick smoking cigarettes so as to keep awake.

Finally they both concluded to go early to the trysting place and wait for their charmer there.

Neither knew of the other's intention of course.

They approached the monument from opposite directions, and met in front of it.

They did not recognize each other in the dark, and passed on in different directions.

After taking a turn around the block, the two dudes approached the monument again, ten minutes later.

Again they met and again they passed by in disgust.

"Hope that fellah won't show up again," they muttered.

Fifteen minutes after they again met in front of the same spot.

"Nevah saw such luck," they mused. "That fellah will spoil all."

Twelve o'clock struck, and this time Jimmy Jones was waiting at the monument with a club.

Footsteps were heard and Jimmy spat on his hands.

He meant business.

Would the dudes have a nice time when they came up?

You bet, but it would be nothing to the time that Jimmy Jones would have.

## PART VIII.

**T**WO little dudes on the mash were they, two little dudes who had gone astray out of their depth, as you might say—two silly dudes on the mash.

Chollie and Gussie had come out at midnight to keep an appointment with a supposed crush who had written them a gushy letter.

It was all a fake.

Tom Trust had written the letter, and the dudes were sold.

He had also sent two letters to Jimmy Jones as if from the dudes, threatening to punch him if he showed up.

He did show up, and very strong at that.

As the clocks struck twelve he was waiting at the appointed spot with a club.

The dudes approached and met as they had already done several times in the last hour.

They glared at each other and stood still instead of passing on as they had done before.

Jimmy Jones peeped out from behind the monument.

So did the moon from behind a cloud.

Then Jimmy came out and gave an exhibition of club swinging.

"Going to chew my ears off, are yer, you mutton-head?"

"Biffo!"

Chollie Smith got a crack that made him see stars.

"I'm no good, am I, and yer goin' ter punch my snoot, hey?"

Whack!

Gussie got it right in the neck and went down like a shot.

"No two dudes is going ter lick Jimmy Jones when I spit on me hands, and don't yer forget it."

Thump!

Bump!

The two dudes got up in order to beat a retreat.

They did not have time to do that, for Jimmy sent them sprawling.

Then that mad tough pounded them till he got tired.

The dudes grew weary a long time before he did, however.

Mr. Jimmy Jones could keep up that sort of thing, if necessary, till morning.

He was used to slugging and rather enjoyed it.

Biff!

Whack!

No sooner did the dudes get up than down they went again.

Each thought that the other was his assailant.

"Stop that, you howid Smith!"

"Don't you hit me again, sah, you low wufflan Wobbinson."

Then both jumped up again.

"Going to smash my head and chew my ears, was you?" asked the redoubtable Jimmy Jones.

Then he swung his club around with force enough to have knocked over the monument, if it had ever been hit.

Luckily the dudes took a simultaneous tumble.

They guessed, at the same instant, that the tough had written decoy letters to get them there and then thump the nonsense out of them.

The decoy part was correct enough, but



Jimmy Jones had been sold as well as they had.

The minute they heard his voice they fled. It was very fortunate for them that they did.

Otherwise it is quite likely that what little brains they had would have been frescoing the base of the monument a moment later.

Swish!

As that club swung around it made as much wind as a cannon ball.

The force of the blow made Mr. Jimmy Jones spin around and around two or three times and caused him considerable dizziness.

When he recovered himself the distant patter of the dudes' footsteps on the walk was all the sound he heard.

concluded to play another gag on the dudes.

There was a certain similarity between this one and the last, but then that did not make any great difference.

Those dudes were green enough to bite twice at the same snap, and the boys knew it.

They allowed a few days to go by, and then used Uncle Sam's mails as a medium for carrying on the snap, same as before.

This time, however, they got a nice young lady to help them out.

She was a seminary girl, and as fully up to snuff as the boys.

She did not chew gum, nor talk slang, nor flirt on the streets, nor speak in italics; in fact, she was a very proper young person.

She was as fond of a joke as the next one,

thenticity of the thing as to have denied that the sun shone.

Their vanity made them both easy dupes.

Of course the thing was all right.

Each knew that he was the handsomest, best-dressed and most intelligent young man in town.

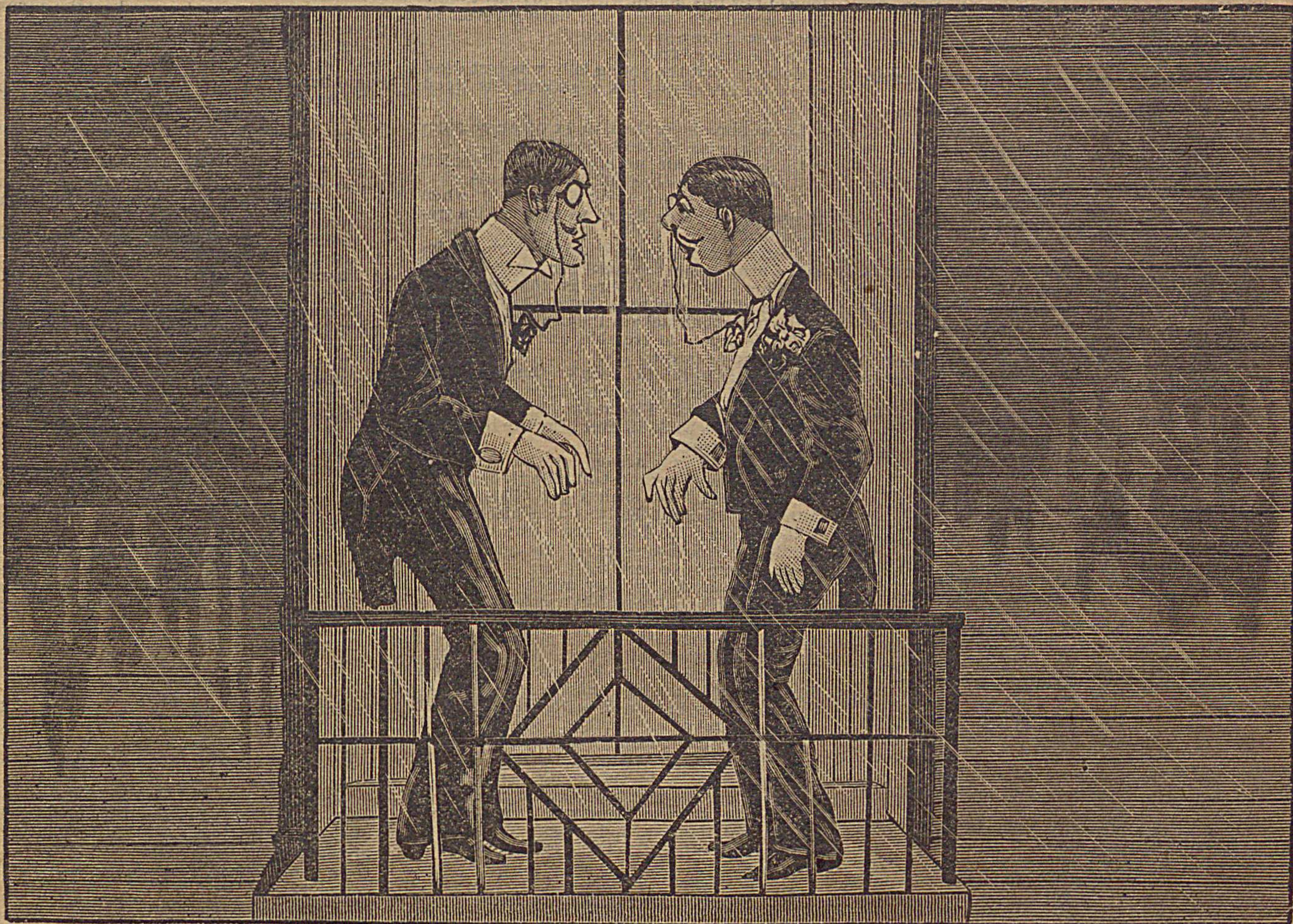
The thing could not be a hoax, therefore.

The best of it was that neither knew that the other had received a missive just like his own.

The deadly enmity that existed between them precluded the possibility of collusion.

Well, they were both transported to the highest heaven of delight.

The notes just tickled them to death.



There they stood on that small balcony exposed to that awful drizzle, too proud to console with one another in their misery, and thinking of the cozy room within, so near and yet so far.

"Good thing I didn't hit 'em that last time," remarked the tough. "Der law counts a dude as a human bein', and I'd have been a murderer, just as though I'd killed a feller of sense. When I spit on me hands I mean business, and dis time I guess I must ha' lit'rally flooded 'em."

Then Jimmy Jones shouldered his club and went home, his vengeance having been already more than satisfied.

A black eye for Chollie, and a contused nose for Gussie, were the signs by which Tom and Ned learned, the next morning, that the two dudes had kept their appointment.

"Wonder how Jimmy Jones feels?" asked Tom, with a chuckle.

"Tip top," answered Ned. "I saw him going to his work, and he was spitting on his hands all the way."

"My dude has a black eye, and looks just too wicked to breathe."

"Mine has a swelled nose, and knows a good deal more than he did last night."

"Yes, it was a good deal, and Jimmy had a fist full of clubs."

"Hearts were not trumps last night, I guess."

"No, sir; and our friends had a freeze out."

"Well, we'll leave 'em alone now until—"

"The next time?"

"That's about the size of it."

It wasn't very long after that before the boys

however, and readily consented to assist the boys in humbugging the dudes.

Those two slims were known to her by sight, but they did not know even her name or where she lived, or anything about her.

One day two little notes on pink paper, scented with violets and written in the daintiest of feminine hands were received by the dudes.

They were exactly alike, with the exception of the addresses, and were just too sweet for anything.

Gussie's note, of which Chollie's was a verbatim copy, ran thusly:

"HUNTERDON, Oct. 20, 18—.

"MY DEAR MR. ROBINSON.—Pardon my boldness, but I am really fascinated by your charming manners, elegant dressing, and dazzling good looks. If I do not know you I shall surely die. I want you to call on me. Be prepared to come any time within an hour's notice. Do not tell any one, or I shall hate you, whom now I love so rapturously.

Yours, Q."

The result of this sweet scented, honey laden note upon that dude may easily be imagined.

He was struck all of a heap.

Chollie was just as bad.

He was all broke up.

Gussie had never a doubt of the genuineness of the epistle.

Chollie would as soon have doubted the au-

There was a run on perfumery, hair oil and gaudy scarfs right away.

Having filled the dudes with taffy, the boys awaited a favorable opportunity to carry on the joke.

Both Chollie and Gussie were on the tiptoe of expectation, and watched for a second letter with the vigilance of a darky looking for prime chickens in his neighbor's hen-roost.

They were as eager for the promised meeting as the boys were themselves.

Tom and Ned kept their eyes peeled for a fitting occasion.

It came at last.

Imagine the darkest, rainiest, coldest, most uncomfortable night you ever saw in your life.

Well, the night that the boys chose knocked that clean out.

It drizzled, there was a fog, and the cold just searched out the very marrow in your bones.

When the boys found out what sort of night it was they proceeded to enact the second scene of their little drama.

Chollie was eating his supper when a messenger boy brought him a note and immediately fled.

Chollie knew the handwriting and was tickled all over.

This was the way the note ran.



"DEAREST MR. SMITH.—I will see you this evening at eight o'clock, no earlier, no later. Second house on right-hand side of Hunterdon avenue above Wood-side. Ask for Miss Jennie. Till then, adieu. Yours as before. Q."

There was a full hour in which to get dressed, but Chollie wished that it was two, so that he might do full justice to the subject.

He resolved to do the thing up in the highest style known to the art.

Nothing but the full dress act would suffice.

This time there would be no flies on him.

No patches on his pants on this occasion.

The leader of the four hundred might take lessons in style from him when he was all fixed.

Gussie Robinson received a note similar to the one sent to Chollie.

A messenger brought it when he was mixing pills in the store.

It was like Chollie's in all but one particular.

The time set for him to call on Miss Jennie was eight-thirty, no earlier, no later.

There would be nothing doing in the store on such a night.

Gussie therefore took the liberty to shut up early, and then posted around to his boarding-house to put on his togs.

He at once decided that only full-dress would do.

Hunterdon avenue was the toniest street in town, and Woodside came next.

Miss Jennie was therefore one of the belles of the place beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt.

Gussie remembered the house, and knew it was one of the most complete and elegant in the place.

Consequently he could only go in full-dress.

This time he was fortunate enough to have a whole dress shirt, and he had kept it ready for just such an emergency.

There would be no wrinkles on that dude this evening.

But what a night it was for a call!

"Shouldn't wondah if hah fathah is called out of town, and that's the weason faw selecting this evening," thought Gussie. "I am awfully anxious to see the deah ewechaw, don't yer know."

"Got to make a date on the sly, deah boy," mused Chollie to himself, "and it's pwobably this evening aw none, baw Jove. Chawmed to meet haw at any time, waine aw shine, baw Jove."

Enveloped to his eyes in a big cape ulster, with a muffler about his throat, thick overshoes on his feet, and a huge umbrella over his head, Chollie Smith made his way to the place appointed, arriving at the first stroke of eight.

The second stroke and the ring at the door bell were simultaneous.

The dude was admitted by a very genteel and apparently discreet footman, and asked for Miss Jennie, per agreement.

"Up-stairs, second floor front. The young lady is waiting. Allow me to take your things."

Chollie emerged from his ulster and overshoes like a butterfly from a chrysalis, and as he passed a long mirror near the foot of the winding stairs, took a survey of himself.

He thought he looked just too sweetly precious for anything.

For once he was right.

But, then, anybody who is not deformed or elephantine, can look well in a dress suit, so Chollie had not so much to boast of after all.

Having seen that everything was all correct, Chollie followed a second footman up the velvet-carpeted stairs while the first put his wet apparel out of sight.

The flunky showed the way into a cozy little parlor, and then showed himself possessed of great discretion and vanished.

The room was beautifully furnished. There were colored globes on the chandelier, which made the light very soft and dreamy, a cheerful fire burned in an open grate, rich hangings depended from the cornices, and everything was in the very best of taste.

Poor Chollie thought he was in Paradise, for never had he beheld such luxury, such evidences of wealth and refinement.

"The whole house is supawb," he thought. "Baw Jove, the guyl must be awfully wich! Yaw a lucky fellah, Chollie, deah boy, 'pon me wawd. Yaw fortune is made. Go in and win the deah ewechaw, you lucky dog."

The presiding genius of the place was a very pretty young lady dressed in white, who sat on a low plush-covered easy-chair drawn up before the fire.

When the footman had vanished, she arose, came forward, extended her hand and said:

"Oh, my dear Mr. Smith, you cannot think how delighted I am at your promptness. Do sit down. The weather is frightful out of doors, is it not?"

"Hawwid, but I don't mind the weathah. I would have come if it had been evah so much wawse, baw Jove. I don't believe that waining cats and dawgs aw pitchfawks could have pwevented me fwom seeing you. I don't, weally."

"Ah, you are a flatterer, Mr. Smith."

"Not at all. I only speak the twuth. I wouldn't have stayed away, baw Jove, if all my fwiends had been pewishing. I have longed faw this houah with all my hawt, baw Jove, and death only could have pwevented my keeping the appointment."

Chollie was getting on.

He knew that the young lady was just dead stuck on his shape, his togs and his good looks.

Leave him alone, then, to fix up an engagement before he left the house.

He drew a chair up close to Miss Jennie's and began to give her taffy at wholesale.

He had given her about a ton of it, when the front door was heard to shut with a tremendous bang.

Then a heavy step was heard on the stairs and a gruff voice demanded in tones of fury:

"Where is he? Where is that pudding-headed idiot? Where is that donkey? Where is the impudent jackass they call Smith?"

Chollie began to tremble, and Miss Jennie sprang up in terror.

"Where is Smith, I say?" thundered the voice. "I won't have him in the house! I'll break his neck! I'll throw him out of the window! I'll walk all over him, the little pettifogging sneak!"

Chollie had now arisen, for the voice and footsteps were now most alarmingly near.

"Oh, dear! what shall I do? That is my father. I thought he was in Chicago. He will kill you. He hates the sight of young gentlemen. You must hide. He is in the hall now. There is no escape."

She was evidently very much frightened, and shook like a flagstaff in a gale of wind.

Chollie was half scared to death, and imagined heavy boots, big hands, stout clubs and all sorts of dreadful things.

"Just let me find that dude and I'll kill him!" roared the voice outside.

"Hide, hide, in mercy's name hide!" gasped the young lady.

"Wheah shall I hide?" sobbed Chollie, who was now as white as a sheet.

"Ah, I have it, the very thing, the balcony!"

So saying, the young lady swept aside a pair of very heavy, exceedingly rich curtains of plush and damask, and raised the window, disclosing a little balcony suspended above the garden.

It was two stories high, and too much of a jump or a climb for the best athlete or even a monkey.

"Step out here," whispered Miss Jennie. "It is your only and last chance."

Chollie Smith stepped out upon the balcony, and then the window was closed and locked, and the curtains drawn across.

We have already mentioned that it was raining that evening.

If Chollie Smith had forgotten it he had cause to recollect it again very shortly.

It was that sneaking sort of rain that does not seem to make very much of a fuss, but wets and chills and takes the starch out of the toughest kind of a man in a brace of shakes.

And there stood Chollie on that little balcony, in swallow-tail coat and *decollete* vest, exposed to that awful drizzle.

He could just make out the sound of voices within the room, and presumed that the Old Man was giving the young lady blazes, if tones counted for anything.

After a little the sounds ceased.

Then Chollie tapped on the window.

It was no go.

Nobody responded, and the drizzle was increasing.

It was no fun standing out there, and Chollie had got more than enough of it.

Having failed to attract attention by tapping, he tried to raise the sash.

Nixey!

It was secured with a patent catch and would not budge.

There was no help for it but to stay out there in the rain until somebody let him in.

At the very second of half-past eight our friend Gussie rang the bell at the front door

of the princely mansion on Hunterdon avenue.

Being admitted, he asked for Miss Jennie, and then got out of a long macintosh, slipped off a pair of rubbers, and stuck his dripping umbrella in the rack.

He wore patent leather pumps, black silk socks, and a full evening suit, with one stud in his shirt front and a strap scarf of white mull around his three and one half inch collar.

He took in everything as he was shown upstairs, and his yellow bangs fairly glistened with joy.

"Just my style, don't ye know?" he thought. "This'll be bettah than keeping a beastly old dwug-staw, old chappie. I'll marwy the deah ewechaw and get the guynah to leave the house to me, don't ye know?"

"My dear Mr. Robinson, how prompt you are?" said Jennie, when Gussie came in. "I could hardly wait for the time to come."

"I have thought of nothing else since I weceived yaw message," said Gussie.

Then he sat down and proceeded to business at once.

In two minutes he was on his knees in the midst of a declaration when the front door was slammed, and that awful voice was heard clamoring for that dude's blood.

Chollie Smith, standing out in the rain, heard it and trembled.

There was the same high tragedy circus as before.

In ten seconds Gussie was railroaded out upon the little balcony and the window closed and curtained.

The balcony was just big enough to hold the two dudes, and there they stood, one on each end, in the rain.

The light from the street lamps below revealed to each the presence of the other.

They were both in the same box, and yet they would not speak.

The rain was impartial, however, and wet them both alike.

Poor dudes!

Didn't they look miserable?

There they stood on that small balcony exposed to that awful drizzle, too proud to console with one another in their misery, and thinking of the cozy room within, so near and yet so far.

It was just horrid!

#### PART IX.

**C**HOLLIE SMITH and Gussie Robinson stood on a little balcony on the second story of the fire mansion on Hunterdon avenue exposed to a drizzling rain.

Tom Trust and Ned New had decoyed them to the house by a couple of scented epistles, breathing the fondest love, and then, on the pretense that her father was coming, the young lady had hustled him out on the balcony and shut the window.

They had been put out there one at a time, and until now neither knew that the other had been invited.

There they were, suspended above the garden, too high to jump, and no way of climbing, standing in the pelting rain clad only in light evening dress.

Even yet they did not realize that they had been humbugged.

Each supposed that he was the favored suitor, and that Miss Jennie had put him out there to protect him from her angry parent.

Of course, being deadly enemies, they could not speak, and there they stood like two graven images out in the rain.

If either had spoken both would have learned the truth.

Neither would, and that's how they both were fooled. Down came the rain, and the two statues turned up their coat-collars and folded the lapels over their giddy shirt-bosoms.

Statues!

Gussie fondly wished that he was one.

Marble or bronze statues don't take cold, and he was rapidly getting pneumonia, bronchitis, influenza, and all sorts of throat and lung troubles.

At least, he thought he was, and imagination goes a long way in such cases.

Presently he began to sneeze, keeping it up till he thought his head would fly off.

"Oh, deah, I wish that old wufflan of a fathaw would go to bed," he thought. "I shall weally catch my death out heah. The deah chawmah ought to have given mean umbwel-lah."

The rain ran into the low necked shoes he wore, trickled down behind his high collar and



insinuated itself in his wrist-bands and down upon his enameled shirt front.

Then he started in sneezing again, and really, there was great danger of his being thrown from the balcony by the violence of his efforts. And still the rain came down and had no mercy upon the dude.

If it had been a well behaved rain storm it would have let up for Gussie's sake.

However, the rain has a way of wetting all classes alike, and this one made no discount in favor of dudes.

"Askerchewhew!" cried Gussie, explosively, grabbing hold of the balcony railing to keep from being precipitated to the cold cruel stones below.

"If that wude fellah sneezes like that any

"I woddah what thad fellah is talkig about?" mused Chollie.

Gussie's answer was a sneeze, so violent that it must certainly have loosened the supports of the balcony.

Chollie had had enough of that sort of thing and he tapped on the window.

No use!

There wasn't any one there to hear him.

They would not have paid any attention to him if they had been there.

Then Gussie tried to shove the window up.

He was just as successful as his rival had been.

His fingers were numb with the cold, and if the sash had been unfastened he could not have raised it.

Ten minutes later there came a click. The sash fastening was being removed.

In a second the window was thrown up.

"Hurry! Now's your time," said a voice. "The old man is taking a nap. This is your only chance."

Then the heavy draperies were thrown aside and a dim light could be seen in the apartment.

Chollie and Gussie stepped into the room from the balcony and looked cautiously about.

Presto!

Transformation.

The window went down, the lights went up and the hangings were swept into place.

Then a roar of laughter was heard and the two dudes stood transfixed.



Those two shivering monkeys stood up by the fire with hands extended and paid no more attention to what was said than if they had been deaf mutes.

maw," observed Chollie to himself, "he will loosen the gallew. I wish he would stop."

Gussie did not stop, however, but went on worse than ever.

"Fish-hooks-sketcherew-Horatio!" was his next remark, given with full volume.

The thing was getting monotonous, and Chollie protested.

He could talk at, if not to, his companion in misery. Raising his voice, he observed, in scornful accents:

"Sub fellahs wad a ted acre lot to sdeeze id, but they are ob do accoud!"

Think of talking sarcasm with a cold in your head.

The bitterest invective loses its point under such circumstances.

Chollie had meant to be very cutting. He was simply ridiculous.

Gussie turned up his nose, and concluded to say something that would utterly overwhelm and squelch his detested rival.

"Some fellows, kerchow! want the screw-chow! awth, don't ye whewwowskow! ye know, but they cawn't corkscrewkerchoo! get as much whiskeystewkerchump! as would bury orowfstchew! them, don't ye wowsskerflewchew fff!"

Intensely lucid, very.

More satire knocked into a cocked hat by a cold in the head.

There was not so much room on the balcony, either, and if he moved around too much he might fall off.

He retreated to his corner and turned his back on the storm.

Being well soaked on one side he thought he might give the other side a turn.

Chollie stood in his corner shivering and shaking and vowing all sorts of vengeance on the old man for having interrupted his nice little tete-a-tete.

"I would have declawed myself in anothah moment," thought Gussie, "and that hawid old fool had to intewupt me. Wondah what that Smith fellah was doing out heah? Paw-haps I intewupted him, too."

The minutes rolled on and an hour had passed and still the dudes remained on the balcony.

It seemed an age to them, but it was only one short hour.

Thirty or forty minutes later, the sounds of revelry were heard within.

They could hear voices and music, and see lights flashing out upon the fog from the lower windows.

There was no let up in the rain, however, and they were both soaked through.

At the end of another hour everything grew quiet, the music and sound of joyous voices ceased, and all was dark.

There they stood, looking like two drowned rats, before a roomful of young people, girls and boys.

There were Tom Trust, Ned New, Frankie Freshett, Susie Rumpous, Katie Jones and a whole lot of others, all acquaintances of the two dudes.

Chollie and Gussie were soaking wet, their clothes ran rivulets, their elegant shirt fronts were wilted, their collars were as limp as dish-rags, and their lovely bangs were ruined.

And there sat all those boys and girls laughing ready to kill themselves at the dudes' discomfort.

"Good evening, Mr. Smith; pleasant evening, isn't it?"

"Been star-gazing, eh, Chollie? Nice night for it, isn't it, old boy?"

"Bully night for mashing, isn't it, Gussie?"

"Oh, Mr. Robinson, you do look too awfully amusing for anything."

"Come into the gahden, Gawge! I'll meet you when the weathah is cleah!"

"Oh, you two giddy darlings!"

"Hang yourself out before the fire and get dry, Gussie dear."

"Put yourself on a peg, Chollie, old sweetie, and thaw out."

All this and much more was said to the poor dudes.



They were shivering like mad, and now they both sneezed in chorus.

They didn't care a copper how much that crowd laughed at them if they could only get to the fire.

Didn't it look cozy and nice as it snapped and cracked in the grate?

Well, you can just bet it did!

Paying no heed to the quips and jibes of the merry party, those two half-frozen slims rushed up to the fire and stood one on either side, warming their benumbed hands.

The gang could say what they liked so long as the dudes were wet and cold, but after that look out for squalls.

Those two shivering monkeys stood up by the fire with hands extended and paid no more attention to what was said than if they had been deaf mutes.

Then Miss Jennie came forward and said:

"Gentlemen, don't think after this that every girl you see is in love with you. Please remember this. Now, if you want to get warm you can go down into the kitchen with the other flunkys."

There was a shout of laughter at this, but the satire did not penetrate the thick hide of those two dudes.

They were too completely wrapped up in themselves, and too thorough-mashed on their own excellence to have satire or ridicule take effect on them.

They cared more for that fire than for all the sharp speeches that might be said.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the young lady, in disgust. "The lesson seems to have been wasted. Do get rid of them somehow."

"Enough said," laughed Tom. "Come on, fellows. One, two, three, bounce!"

Then Tom grabbed Gussie, and Ned seized Chollie and, with the help of the other fellows, hustled those slims out in fine style.

They slid them down-stairs, which was better than making them walk and much quicker in the bargain.

At the foot of the stairs the two dandies found their duds awaiting them.

"I weally believe they don't want me any maw," muttered Chollie, as he got into his ulster and overshoes.

"Pon me wawd, I think they aw the wudest people heah I evah met," drawled Gussie, as he enveloped himself in his mackintosh and slid into his rubbers.

Then the dudes went away and the last thing they heard was a peal of laughter from the house.

It was still raining, and seemed never going to stop, the street being full of puddles, into which the two Dromios walked in the dark.

They had got tolerably dry before the fire, and their coats were warm, so that after all they were not so badly off.

"I have a good mind to go into a weal baw-woom, wheah they sell wum, and get full, don't ye know," said Gussie to himself; but aloud, "I feel awfully wicked, old chappie, and it'll be good faw my kerehew! cold. I think those guyls were weal hawid."

Chollie made for the hotel, and stood by the fire, smoking cigarettes till he was warmed through, while Gussie followed and stood on the other side of the hearth, totally ignoring him.

It was all well enough to get warm, but that couldn't bring the shine nor the stiffness back to Chollie's dress shirt, or heal the wounds that his pride had received.

He had been told that all girls were not in love with him, and that cut deeper than the chill in his limbs.

If it were so, then what was he born for?"

Gussie felt as bad or even worse than Chollie did, for he had been cut out of the chance of his life, as he thought, and he now blew the smoke from his cigarette in his rival's face, and gazed upon him with scorn.

Chollie retorted by throwing his butt at Gussie, and calling him a low fellow.

"Low fellah yawself, Patches!"

"Don't you call me names, sah. If you don't take that back I'll stwike you."

The dudes then faced each other in front of the fire, and tried a game of bluff.

Neither dared to strike, but both wanted to scare the other.

"Here, here, we can't have this," cried the clerk. "If you can't behave, you'll have to get out."

The slims continued to glare and threaten, however, and the clerk gave the wink to one of the porters, a big fellow and a slugger also.

His nibbs walked up, grabbed Chollie with his right hand and Gussie with his left, both by the collar, and slung them out of the door so quick that they did not know what had

happened till they found themselves out in the rain.

They both felt too sad to keep up the quarrel, and they made their way home as fast as possible.

For several days after that neither of them would so much as look at a girl, and if forty scented notes on pink paper had been sent to them, neither would have paid them the slightest attention.

The boys had enough to do just then to let the dudes alone for a time, though if you think that those slims were not capable of getting into trouble on their own account, without any outside help, you are greatly mistaken.

Tom and Ned only helped them now and again, but they were quite able to get into difficulty unaided.

A few nights after this, when the weather was pleasant, there was a fair and festival held in the vestry of the Second Baptist Church for the purpose of buying a new organ or piano or something, or, perhaps to buy flannel night-gowns for the Zulus.

At any rate, the fair was held, and the fair sex was there in large numbers, read to coax the money of the young fellows, and of the old fellows, too, if they came, away from them.

The thing was held in the church parlors, where erstwhile the festive oyster stew, consisting of one oyster to a gallon of water and a pound of crackers, was wont to be served at a quarter of a plate and ten cents to get in.

Of course, no such wicked and worldly affairs as lotteries could take place or be sanctioned, but the "take-a-chance" flend got there all the same, though under a different name.

The giddy girls put up packages of all shapes, sizes and weights, and sold them, under seal, for so much a package, and of course that wasn't a lottery; it was simply buying something that you did not see before you paid for it.

Then there was the lemonade well of full strength, warranted harmless, circus lemonade, presided over by an old maid in cork-screw curls and a striped blanket, who called herself Rebecca, and sold the innocuous beverage at a nickel a toothful, and flirted with all the eligible young men in town.

There were plenty more ways of fleecing the unwary, but any of our readers who may have been taken in at one of these affairs can readily recognize the main features, and there is no need of continuing the description.

All the giddy old mashers, all the back-number old maids, all the lovely young girls, and all the lively young fellows in town were at the fair, and of course our two dudes dropped in to see the sights.

They each planked down their little ten cents at the door, but went it alone, as they were soured upon all girls just then and would not have taken one in for a farm with a house, barn and all improvements, including a mortgage, thrown in.

Tom and Ned were there also, and when they saw the dudes they wunk a wink one to another, and remarked:

"There's just our muttons, hey, old chappie? Well, I should smole."

Chollie and Gussie had each and severally resolved to have nothing to do with the female sex.

They passed the various counters superintended by young ladies of their acquaintance, but paid them no attention whatever.

The girls looked disappointed, for the dudes had always been good customers before this, and it was natural to suppose that they would be upon this occasion.

"The dear boys are wary, eh, Thomas?" remarked Ned.

"As trouts, my boy, but we'll show 'em to be nothing but suckers after all."

"Or flatfish, old chappie."

"You've got it."

Then those two bad boys bribed the girls at the packages of mystery counter, to allow them to run the place for awhile.

The girls consented, all the more readily as they had been asked to have ice-cream with their steady company, and our boys were left in charge.

Presently along came the two dudes together, but not in company.

"Here you are, ladies and gents," sang out Tom, "the celebrated mysterious packages, only ten cents apiece and something good in every one. Cash prizes from a cent to a million dollars, grand pianos, brownstone fronts, mowing machines, coffee grinders and diamond pins all going for a song."

"Here you go, fellows," added Ned. "Try

your luck. No lottery, but all the fun you want for a dime. Help buy sealskin ulsters for the Hottentots and carry on the good cause. Every package warranted to contain some useful article and all going at ten cents apiece."

Just then the dudes came up.

"Aw, deah boy," said Chollie to Tom, "you heah? I did not see you befaw."

"That's because you were behind."

"How do, old chappie?" said Gussie to Ned. "Tending staw faw the faiah?"

"Yes, and we're fair and square. Buy a mysterious package?"

"What's in 'em, old chappie?"

"Lots of useful things. You might get a shaving mug or a mustache cup."

"Buy something, Chollie," urged Tom. "I'll pick you a good thing. You ought to have a pocket-book to keep your wealth in, you know."

"How much, deah boy?"

"Ten cents and a ticket for a pack of cigarettes."

"Aw the awticles all useful?"

"Oh, very."

"Pick me out a nice package, deah boy."

"Oh, I'll give you a daisy!"

Gussie was not going to be distanced by that dude.

If Chollie bought something he guessed that he could do the same.

He was at one end of the counter and Chollie at the other, but neither saw his hated rival of course.

Tom and Ned picked out two packages for the dudes, and took the dimes for the same.

Then the slims opened the boxes.

Chollie hauled out a hoopskirt.

Gussie had a jumping-jack and rattle combined.

When the articles were revealed, there was a shout of laughter.

The dudes turned in surprise.

Then they saw a dozen or two girls, who had stolen up unbeknown to them and were now laughing ready to split.

Those two dudes felt just too silly for anything.

No wonder.

## PART X.

CHOLLIE and Gussie had gone to the fair.

They had bought two mysterious packages from Tom and Ned.

Then they were sold.

Chollie's prize was a skeleton skirt.

Gussie drew a rattle.

That wasn't the worst of it.

About twenty girls had stolen up behind them when the articles were purchased, done up in boxes.

When they were taken out all the girls giggled.

Of course that made the dudes feel very nice.

They were down on all girls just then, and now they hated them worse than ever.

"I think yaw weal mean, so theah!" cried Chollie. "You knew what was in the box all the time."

"Give it to your landlady for a mouse-trap, Chollie," suggested Tom.

"Or a frame to train plants on, deah boy," said Ned.

Gussie would have giggled if he had not been as badly caught as the other dude.

"What can I do with this thing?" he asked, very much disgusted.

"Use it to keep you from falling asleep nights when you call on your best girl," answered Ned.

"Keep it to go with your brain, old chappie," interpolated Tom. "They'll make a splendid pair."

Both dudes left the table in wrath, and would not speak to any of the girls for the rest of the evening.

Indeed, they did not remain very late, for they were neither of them very flush, and a church fair is the very worst place in the world for a fellow with a limited cash account.

They sloped in about an hour, and, strange to say, each accused the other of causing his discomfiture.

They went away feeling very sad, but Tom and Ned and the rest of the young people had the dandiest kind of a time.

No more fairs for those dudes.

None but the brave deserve the fair, anyhow.

That's how our two poor slims got left.

About this time those two young jokers, Tom and Ned, agreed between themselves to



play another combination joke on the dudes. Tom was to work Chollie, and Ned was to stuff Gussie up, and then, when all was ready, the trap would be sprung.

This was the way they fixed it.

Tom met Chollie on the main street as the dude was going to his noonday hash, and said:

"Chollie, old man, do you know that young Robinson thinks you are awfully clever?"

"It don't make any odds what that fellah thinks," returned Chollie, very loftily.

"But he really does, old fellow, and feels sorry that you and he cannot be friends. He says you wear the finest cravats he ever saw and would be happy indeed if he could only wear your old ones."

"Weally, I nevah supposed Wobinson had such clevah ideahs."

"Yes, indeed, and he regrets exceedingly that an unfortunate accident should have made you enemies when you ought to have been friends."

"Well, he has some sense aftah all, and if he will apologize I shall be happy to wenew our formah acquaintance."

"He would do anything to be chums with you again, Chollie."

"Weckon he ain't such a bad sawt of chap, when you get at him."

"Not at all. Well, ta-ta, old man. I go this way. See you later."

Ned New, in the meantime, had been filling Gussie to the muzzle with similar taffy.

ly impwoved, I don't know but what I'd bettah meet him half way, don't you know?"

"He says that if you only would he would esteem it a great favor."

"Why, he has impwoved, old chappie, hang me if he hasn't!"

"Well, I must be going, old boy. See you later."

Things were now all ripe for a reconciliation.

Both dudes were flattered to death, and ready to do any foolish thing.

They both made up their minds to break the ice that very afternoon.

Fortunately old Griggs went to New York, and Dr. Bolus was called off to see a patient ten miles away.



Cho'lie kicked over an ash barrel standing at the curb, sending its sweet scented contents into the gutter. Gussie followed his pernicious example by pulling a door-bell as he passed by, and nearly upset himself in the bargain.

"Well, pawhaps the fellah has a twifle maw sense than I give him cwedit faw."

"You didn't hear what he said about your studying law?"

"No, deah boy."

"Well, he said that he really wished he had your brains."

"You don't say?"

"Fact, I assure you."

"I didn't think he had had so much penetration."

"Yes, indeed. He thinks that you ought to take the place of old Griggs in a year or so."

"Pleased to see that his ideahs agwee with mine, deah boy."

"He wonders, too, that a man of your ability would be satisfied to stay in such a one-horse town as this."

"Weally, Tom, deah boy, I have often thought of leaving, don't ye know?"

"Yes, he says that he knows you would succeed."

"Did Wobinson say all this?"

No wonder Chollie was surprised.

Tom was ready for the question.

He smiled sweetly, and said:

"Did you ever know me to deceive you?"

No, he never had.

Tom had done it all the same.

Chollie was tickled away down to his toes.

He sailed into the drug shop, treated Gus to caramels three days old and said:

"Say, Gus, what do you suppose Smith said about you to-day?"

"I'll punch that vulgah pawson's head if he talks about me," retorted Gussie, angrily.

"No—no, this was something very complimentary."

"Why, that fellah hates me like the vewy old scwatch because I've got maw style than he has."

"He said that he wished he had brains enough to study medicine instead of law, which any fool could learn in six months."

"Did he weally?"

"Why, he said that you had forgotten more than old Bolus ever knew."

"Did he, indeed?"

"He said he was sorry that you and he were not friends as you used to be."

"It's the vulgah fellah's own fault, old chappie."

"So he said, but he feels afraid to make the first advances. Now if he had your common sense, he says, he would know just what to do."

This little bit of taffy caught Gussie right in the neck.

He swallowed it without choking.

"Well, if he weally wants to make up, old chappie, and as he appeahs to have so gweat-

Shortly after the bosses had vanished the dudes appeared on the street.

They were gotten up to kill.

They both got onto each other at the same instant.

Instead of turning up their noses as they had been accustomed to do, they rushed into each other's arms.

As it were, of course.

"How do, Chollie?" said Gussie, putting out his hand. "I'm weal sowy we haven't been fwiends, don't ye know."

This looked like the first advance.

Chollie could not refuse to accept.

"Don't distwess yawself, Gussie, old man. Yaw a bettah fellah than I've given you cwedit faw."

The ice was broken, clean to smash.

It was easy sailing now.

The former enemies shook hands and vowed eternal friendship.

This was at three-ten, g. m.

"Busy this aftahnoon, deah boy?"

"No, I'm off faw the day, old chappie."

"Then let's celebuate."

"The vewy thing I was going to pwopose."

"Let's paint the town wed, baw Jove."

"We'll be weal wicked, don't ye know."

"That's just the way I feel. Have a ciga-

wette, old man?"

"I'm in faw a weal cigah, chappie. Won't



you have one with me? These are the best in town. Didn't come out of our shop, chappie."

"Don't care if I do, deah boy. Come and have a dwink with me. Feel so awfully wicked, baw Jove!"

"So do I; as wicked as the old Sewatch, old chappie."

"Baw Jove, Gussie, we'll go into a weal saloon and kick ovah the cuspidaws and waise the vevy deuce."

"That's just the way I feel myself, old chappie."

Then those two dudes sailed off down the street arm in arm, puffing two five-cent Malodoro cigars, which Gussie had prigged out of the show-case in the drug shop.

They were now as firm friends as they had before been bitter enemies.

Chollie told Gussie that he was the smartest fellow in town, and Gussie informed Chollie that a brilliant future lay before him.

It is a wonder that the sun did not grin to see that affectionate pair of dudes giving each other confectionery.

It was too sweetly gushing to last.

"Baw Jove, old man, yaw a twump," said Chollie.

"Yaw the best fwiend I've got, don't ye know," responded Gussie.

The idiots!

At Chollie's invitation, they entered a real saloon and called for real drinks.

"Soda?" asked the clerk in white jacket and apron.

"No, sah. I feel weal wicked, me boy.

Give me a wegulah cocktail, and make it stwong."

"Same for me," said Gussie. "I feel just as wicked as my fwiend."

The bartender was as wicked as both of the dudes together.

He scented a snap, and meant to work it at its highest pressure.

He put enough hard stuff into each of those glasses to make two good drinks.

Why, even Jimmy Jones, the tough, would not have taken a stronger dose.

"Heah's all the haiah off yaw head, me boy," said Chollie, raising his glass.

"Yaw vevy good health, chappie."

Then they gulped down those drinks.

Great billygoats!

It was a wonder that Chollie did not set the towel on fire when he wiped his mouth.

As for Gussie he thought that a whole political procession, torches and all, had gone down his gullet.

He winked and blinked and shed tears, but never gave himself away.

"Tha's the kin' of a drink," he remarked, huskily. "Le's have 'nother."

"Wait a few minutes, me boy, till I eat a cwackah."

"Well, set 'em up, mistah, and we'll take our time."

The man behind the counter did set 'em up, and he set 'em strong, too, and no error.

He gave each dude enough to knock them silly.

He saw lots of fun ahead.

He didn't like dudes.

Consequently he meant to keep these two out of his place thereafter.

Our two slims were in no very great hurry to take their second dose.

They thought they had better play a game of billiards first.

What a game it was!

First Chollie knocked a ball off the table and sent it through a mirror ten feet away.

"Tha's good shot," muttered Gussie.

Then he tried his hand at the cue.

He succeeded in smashing two globes, leaving the balls untouched.

The bartender began to think that the joke was not what he expected it would be.

Then Chollie scratched a hole in the cloth, and knocked two balls off the table.

Gussie followed by missing the balls again, and landing on the floor on top of his high hat.

Oh, it was a daisy game, and no mistake.

Chollie sat on the sanded floor in trying to make a masse shot, and ripped up one leg of his don't-mention-'ems.

Then Gussie kicked over a spittoon, and hit a ball on the next table instead of the one at which he was playing.

The curator of the place began to feel sick.

He must fire those dudes out at any cost.

"Drinks, gents," he said, coming up with the two decoctions on a tray.

"S'looking at you," said Chollie.

"S'm 'ere," returned Gussie.

Chollie spilled half of his poison on his shirt front, but got away with the remainder.

"Whoop! Who cares f'r billiards?" he shouted. "Le's go 'ome an' make a night of it, ole man."

Gussie swallowed his drink, and felt more wicked than before.

"Wha's charge?" he asked. "Got lot's o' money. Never min'th' game. Billiards played out, don't yer know. What'll you have y'se'f?"

"One dollar please."

"Take it out o' that, ole man. Never min' the change. Come on, Chollie, le's go some-eres else."

As the bill that he gave the man was for a dollar it is needless to say that the fellow was not loaded down with small change.

"Never mind the change," he remarked to himself. "No, I don't think I will. Wonder if he meant that for a joke? Didn't know dudes had sense enough to make a joke."

Our two slims, having recovered their hats, locked arms and went out of that liquid refreshment-room a-howling.

Fortunately there was no one on the same sidewalk, for they took up the whole of it."

They waltzed along, for it could not be called walking, arm in arm, making a holy show of themselves.

"For he's a jolly goo' fellow!" roared Gussie, nearly upsetting Chollie with his gyrations.

"Whish nobody candyny," added Chollie, reeling over to the outer edge of the walk and dragging Gussie with him.

"Feel awful wicked, don't you, ole f'ler."

"Besh'er life, ole man."

"Les ha' some fun."

"I'm up to anysing, m' boy."

Then Chollie kicked over an ash barrel standing at the curb, sending its sweetscented contents into the gutter.

Gussie followed his pernicious example by pulling a door-bell as he passed by, and nearly upset himself in the bargain.

Then they yelled again, and Chollie knocked over another ash receptacle.

It happened to be a cold day for them.

Gussie yanked at another door-bell, and pulled it out in his exceeding vigor.

Then they went howling down the street like twin cyclones on a lark.

Of course all this hilarity could not fail to attract attention.

All the ragamuffins in town were drawn to the scene, as though at an instant's notice.

This was great fun for them.

They ran after the two dudes yelling like so many wild savages.

They did not stop at that, either.

No, sir!

They gathered up the contents of the overturned ash barrels, and gave the dudes a volley.

Tomato cans, old boots, ancient vegetables and defunct felines were only a few of the articles that flew after the dudes.

Their battered hats, torn garments, and, above all, their newest style of walk, called for universal admiration.

There were no coppers about, or they might have made it hot for Chollie and Gussie.

The street boys more than took their places, however.

"I say, get onto the walking clo'se pins! Ain't they stunnors!"

"De Si'mese twins out on a bust! Don't dey look putty?"

"Give 'em another one for their mothers!"

The racket did not disturb the two dudes in the least.

On the contrary, they rather enjoyed the notoriety it gave them.

"We're two of the boys, ain't we, Shollie?" inquired Gussie, in maudlin accents.

"Besh'er life we are! S'em up!"

"Hooray f'r our side! Whoop!"

Then an aged tomato took Chollie in the back of the neck and spattered all over him.

"Mus' ha' bust a blood ves'l," he observed. "Le's g'ome. You g'ome wiz me ole f'ler."

"Shert'ly. We won't g'ome till mornin', till daylight does s'pear."

It was very lucky that the lawyer and the druggist did not see their two clerks.

In that case the boys would have had the grand bounce.

Tom and Ned were out, however.

They took in the whole circus.

"Let's follow 'em up," said Tom.

"Le's g'ome to my house," said Chollie. "It's right crossze ra'ro' track."

"Orright, ole f'ler, go 'head."

Then the two slims steered for across the street.

They tumbled into the gutter the first thing.

All the boys yelled, and proceeded to throw mud at them.

This demonstrated what a fine sense of honor the American youth possesses.

The dudes did not mind a trifle like that, however.

"Mighty long steps here, hey, Shollie?"

"Besh'er life!"

Then they got up and went on their way, keeping to the crossing not more than half the time, and wallowing in the mud the other half.

Tom and Ned drove away the mob of boys and then followed the dudes at their leisure.

"This is only half of the show, Edward."

"Right you are, Thomas. The best is yet to come."

Of course the two slims could not get across the track without stumbling.

There were no trains in the way, however, and so they were all hunk so far as that went.

But what a looking pair of beauties they were.

Their hats were smashed in, their scarfs were up under their ears, their coats were half torn off, and there was so much mud on their clothes that you could not tell what the original color had been for the life of you.

They did not yell now, but occasionally there was a gurgling sound in their throats, as though there was a pair of bullfrogs in their stomachs and they wanted to come out.

The course they followed would have made a snake turn sick, it was so crooked; but they got there just the same.

Chollie knew the way to his house, if he did not know anything else.

It was very lucky that the landlady was out searing up society news at that time.

It was also fortunate that the dog was asleep.

It could be put down, too, as just right, that the cook, laundress and scrub-woman were all so engrossed in their duties that the dudes were able to enter the house unseen and unmolested.

"I'll go first, jus' you foller ze banisters," said Chollie.

"Orright."

Of course they slipped several times, and banged their noses on the steps.

That didn't hurt them any.

Indeed, they went up-stairs twice, so far as the number of steps ascended counted; but they arrived at the top all right.

Chollie staggered into the room, took a seat, leaned back and said:

"Take shair, got some pishers to show you."

"Orright, ole f'ler."

Then Gussie sat down opposite Chollie, and stared blankly at him.

"Where are we now, chappie?"

"My room."

"Tha's a'right. Yer a good f'ler, ain't you, h'm?"

"Course."

"N so'm I, h'm?"

"Course y'are."

"We're bofe good f'lers, ain't we?"

"Course w'are."

"Zen 'rah for bofe of us."

"Rah, it is."

What beauties!

There they sat facing each other, their legs extended, their arms hanging down, and their heads thrown forward.

What intelligent faces they had just now, to be sure!

They looked about as wise as pigs.

The longer they sat there the less they cared about getting up.

Somehow they seemed to be glued to their seats.

The fact of the matter was that they were fast asleep.

Those real drinks had been too much for them.

Pretty soon Tom Trust stuck his funny mug in at the door, and took in the sleeping beauties.

"That's all hunky," he remarked, softly, as he stole away.

Presently he rejoined Ned in the front yard.

"All right," he said. "I've got a bully snap for the wind up. Come on."

It was a bully snap and no mistake, and if you read the next chapter you'll find out all about it.



## PART XI.

**G**USSIE and Chollie sat fast asleep in two chairs facing one another in Chollie's room. Their celebration racket had been too much for them.

There they were, all broken up and locked in the arms of Morpheus.

It was then that Tom Trust and Ned New appeared on the scene.

Each carried a razor and a strop.

Likewise a big towel and a shaving cup.

Wherefore these preparations?"

Well, for the nonce, our two young shavers had turned barbers.

This was the second act of the comedy.

Didn't the dudes wake up all this time?

Not a wake.

The lathering and scraping seemed to soothe them, if anything.

At any rate, they slept like snoozers.

The boys finished at the same time.

Then they stood back and surveyed their work.

They were more than satisfied.

But then a horrid, a fairly fiendish thought came into Tom's head.

How could he be so unkind?

It makes us weep to think of it.

The bad, wicked boy!

He wanted to cut off the dudes' mustaches!

Awful!

Think of the care, the agony of mind, the

Then the boys swapped winks.

"Ain't they daisies?"

"I should asseverate!"

After this they cleaned up and gathered their barberizing appurtenances into a bundle and skipped out.

Poor dudes!

They slept on, unconscious of the terrible awakening to come.

After a time they grew less drowsy.

They might not have awakened, however, had it not been for the first supper bell.

That made noise enough to awaken the dead in their mossy graves.

It made more racket than the fire alarm bell by fifty per cent.

Of course it aroused the dudes.



They caught sight of each other. They leaned forward, hands on knees, and stared. Neither knew the other. The razor had made them both totally different persons. Each thought that he was at home, and that an intruder had come in upon him. Both sprung to their feet.

Tom took Chollie and Ned attended to Gussie.

First they put a big towel around each dude's neck, tucking it in at the collar.

Then they lathered them from chin to top-knot.

"Run me a race?" asked Tom.

"Certainly."

That settled it.

The extempore barbers got to work in a jiffy.

The razors went over those two heads like fire through tow.

Talk of the scythe of the reaper, why, that was a baby to those razors.

The way those bangs and frizzes melted away was a caution to hair tonics.

Scrape, scrape, scrape!

At every sweep of the razor a curl or a lock had to go.

They cut regular swaths and went down to the skin every time.

It was not long before those dudes were as bald as when they first came into this cold, cruel world.

A sweep of the towel and a little soap cleared the way for the second attack.

At it went the boys, and when they got through those two knobs were as shiny as the road to heaven.

weeks of expectation, the prayers, the tears and the sighs that had been spent upon those delicate hirsute appendages.

And now all this was to be swept away with one stroke of the razor.

Horrible!

Had those boys no remorse, no compunctions of conscience, no delicacy of feeling that they could perpetrate such a dastardly outrage?

Nixey!

The fact is, they rather gloried in it, the ruffians.

"Let's take off their mustaches, Ned, and give 'em a show," said Tom.

"You'll have to give me a spy glass, then, so that I can see my dude's."

"Oh, you can go over the place where it ought to be."

And so they did, both of them.

Alas, for those budding beards!

There wasn't a spear of hair left when the boys finished.

Wouldn't you think they ought to have been ashamed of themselves?

Well, they were not.

They rejoiced in their wickedness on the other hand.

The dudes were still snoozing when the deed was accomplished.

They awakened simultaneously.

The stretching of their legs, the raising of their arms, the straightening of their bodies and yawning, was all done with the unanimity of a song and dance team.

Then they caught sight of each other.

They leaned forward, hands on knees, and stared.

Neither knew the other.

The razor had made them both totally different persons.

Then too, those ten-horse-power cocktails had befuddled them.

Each thought that he was at home, and that an intruder had come in upon him.

Both sprang to their feet.

Then each made a rush at the other.

Chollie was determined to put Gussie out, and Gussie had an equally strong desire to eject Chollie.

"Get out of my woom, you chump."

Each grabbed the other and dragged him towards the door.

They struggled and wrestled like a pair of wildcats.

They reached the door which opened outwards upon a little landing.

Of course they had to stagger against it with all their weight.



And of course the door flew open with a bang and let both dudes out on the landing.

That was not all of it.

They rolled down-stairs, bumpetty-bump, and scared all hands.

When they reached the bottom they jumped up and began to fight.

It was a real fight, too, and they meant business.

Gussie gave Chollie the most beautiful black eye you ever saw.

Cholly returned the compliment by drawing the rosy from Gussie's bugle.

They couldn't pull hair, of course, but they scratched and bit and thumped like a couple of Kilkenny cats.

In the midst of the fracas, Mrs. Baker, the cook, the chambermaid, the rich boarder, the poor boarder, the fat boarder, the lean boarder, the up-stairs girl, the knife cleaner, the nigger boy and two or three girls from next door all rushed upon the scene.

"Why, Mr. Smith!"

"Dear me, Mr. Robinson!"

Then the dudes recognized one another.

Then each put his hand to his head.

Then both got mad.

"Don't you nevah speak to me again, nevah!"

"Yaw the meanest tramp in the whole town, and I've done with you fawevah."

Then both fled.

Gussie flew out of the house, and Chollie dashed up-stairs.

This happened at five-forty in the afternoon. They had sworn an everlasting friendship at three-ten.

It had lasted just two hours and thirty minutes.

Now they were more bitter enemies than before.

And all on account of two cocktails.

Chollie was at home and was all right, but Gussie wasn't.

He had to go a considerable distance, and here he was without a hat or anything else wherewith to cover up his baldness.

He had left his chapeau at Chollie Smith's, and of course it was out of the question to go back after it.

He had a fancy red and yellow handkerchief in his overcoat pocket, however, and he took that.

He was late to supper of course, and came in just as the crowd was coming out.

"Why, Mr. Robinson has shaved off his mustache!" cried one gushing young lady who wore glasses and set up type on the Hunterdon weekly paper.

"H'm! a cat could lick off all the mustache he had," retorted an old bachelor boarder, with scornful emphasis.

Gussie sat down to the table, keeping on his gorgeous head covering.

"What makes you wear that hideous thing in the house?" asked the old bachelor.

"Cold in my head," snapped Gussie.

The boarder saw through this little excuse.

He also saw under the handkerchief.

"Nonsense!" he sputtered.

Then he caught hold of one corner of the wipe and whisked it off.

The skating rink was open.

What a yell there was!

Everybody laughed first, before asking what the trouble was.

"Why, Mr. Robinson, you've lost all your beautiful bangs."

There was a big glass opposite Gussie and he now caught a good view of himself.

The young barber had not left him any eyebrows, even.

"Whatever is the matter?" shrieked Mrs. Hatchett.

"Big flah, explosion at ouah place this af-tahnoon, don't ye know," answered Gussie, glibly. "Bawned all me haiah off."

"Looks to me as if it had been shaved," remarked the old cynic. "They say that shaving the head is good for the brain. You need it, goodness knows!"

From this it might be inferred that Gussie was no favorite of the bachelor boarder.

He wasn't.

The whole gang had to snicker of course.

"You needn't laugh," sputtered the dude.

"You haven't got any too much bwain yaw-selves, the whole cwowd of you."

"Not bad for a dude," said the modern Diogenes.

Gussie ate his supper in silence, though everybody had something to suggest.

"You'll have to buy a wig, won't you, Mr. Robinson? They've got some lovely red ones down street."

"Oh, he's all right. He can put sugar on his head and pass as a pill very nicely."

"Pill enough already, I should say."

"Mustard plasters are good to bring the hair out."

"There isn't any more to bring out until it grows a bit."

"You might let out space to advertisers on that head of yours, Gus. I'll take a square inch myself if you don't charge too much."

"Go sit on yaw-selves, the whole blooming lot of you!" cried Gussie, in a rage.

Then he jumped up, nearly overturning the table, and retreated to his room on the floor above.

Here was another thing to lay up against Smith.

The vulgar fellow had shaved his head while pretending to be his dearest friend.

Could there be anything but war between them after that?

Never, ha-ha, never!

After this their paths in life were as wide apart as the diameter of the earth would permit.

Sooner than recognize that Smith fellow again, Gussie would have let his head out for a chopping block.

Chollie felt just as bitterly as Gussie did.

Robinson, under the pretense of friendship, had got him drunk and then had fun with him.

Of course there could be no pardon for an offense so heinous as that.

Henceforth they must meet as strangers, must never speak as they passed by, must never even think of each other.

Chollie wore a polo cap when he came to the table, for he could not persuade any one to bring his meals up to him.

He also sneaked out and bought a false mustache and eyebrows to mend matters a bit.

He couldn't go a wig, however, for that would cost too much.

He was obliged to sit in the office with his hat on, however, for he took cold if he did not.

To this Griggs objected until he knew the reason, which he discovered by making the dude uncover the block.

"What have you been doing now, you fool?" he demanded.

"Fire up to our place," explained Chollie. "Burned all my hair off."

"Keep your hat on, then, or wear a skull cap. I can't have such a looking object around. Maybe when your hair comes the brains will come with it."

That was tough on the dude, but he had no redress, as Griggs was his boss, and would take no back talk.

For a month those two bald-headed dudes were flooded with letters and circulars and samples of trial bottles from no end of hair preparation dealers, the boys having sent their addresses to dozens of such people all over the country, and even as far as England, France, Germany and Australia.

In about four weeks the hair had grown on the heads of those two dudes to such an extent that they were not obliged to wear skull-caps, which was a decided relief.

To be sure they looked as if they had just finished a term in State prison, but then, as short hair is fashionable, they were all right as far as that went.

In another week they could actually part their hair, and of course that made them extremely happy.

Their dream of love was over, however, and each paid as little attention to the other as though he had not existed.

They were so mad with one another that they did not even quarrel.

To fight with a fellow one must notice him, of course, and that was what neither of the dudes would do to the other.

Well, Tom and Ned had not given the dudes a rest all this time, of course, but there were no particularly brilliant gags, such as are worthy of record.

Now, however, the two jokers concluded that it was about time for a good, old picnic for the benefit of Chollie and Gussie, and they accordingly put their heads together to devise a snap good enough.

There was nothing the matter with working a few more little ones, however, till the big one was ready, and this was what they did.

The village post office, as we have before remarked, was a great gathering place for dudes, silly school girls and other idiots.

Chollie and Gussie went there to get their

mail every morning, also to see their friends who weren't male.

One Saturday morning, just before mail time, Tom and Ned sauntered into a butcher shop and purchased two big pieces of dog's meat.

That is, it wasn't the meat of dogs, but the kind usually fed to canines, although everybody calls it dog's meat, well knowing that it comes from the horns of an ox.

Well, armed with two big fish-hooks and the meat, those jokers started for the post-office.

They let one or two purps have a smell of the meat on the way, but that was all.

When they reached the office, the usual crowd was there, jabbering away at the rate of nineteen to the dozen.

Chollie and Gussie had lock boxes, or at least their bosses did, which amounted to the same thing.

Gussie always spoke of the drug shop as his own, and if asked if he had such or such an article, would reply, glibly:

"No, I haven't that, but I can give you something just as good. I expect to have some in a few days when I look over my stock. I don't sell much of that. I prefer the other."

You have all seen such people, so we won't say anything more.

Well, those two lock boxes were in the same section, and on the same row, the second from the floor.

Notwithstanding the fact that the two dudes were obliged to kneel side by side in getting at the boxes, they said anything but their prayers on such occasions.

It is an awkward thing to do, to kneel on the dirty floor and pull out a lot of letters and papers that had been wedged into the box, particularly when somebody else right next to you is doing the same thing, and a lot of other people are crowding around, pushing against you, stepping on your coat, inviting you to get out of the way, and otherwise making your life a burden.

That is what those two dudes had to do every morning, and they did not like it.

Of course neither would wait till the other got through and then proceed leisurely about it.

No, sir!

If either could bother the other and make him trouble he meant to do it.

Well, there was a big mail on this particular morning, and of course there was more crowding than ever.

Tom and Ned elbowed their way through the surging mass, and paused just behind the dudes at their devotions.

"Don't see what some folks want to have so many lettahs faw," sputtered Chollie. "They nevah wead the hawlf of 'em and they only annoy othah folks, baw Jove!"

This was intended as a fling at Gussie, whose box was stuffed full this morning.

"Some fellahs are always hanging around when you don't want 'em. There ought to be a wule against twamps cwowding into public places like this."

That was Gussie's gentle way of insinuating that Chollie's displacement of air was preferable to his society.

Tom and Ned were busy as well as the dudes.

To the coat tail of each they fastened a big fish hook, on the other end of which was a bit of meat.

Then they sneaked out.

Two or three poodles, a hound or two, and a big bull pup had followed them into the place and were very much interested in their movements.

When the boys got out the purps got in.

The way they went for that meat was something fine to see.

The biggest dog of all dived between a fat man's legs, nearly upsetting him.

Then he collared on to the bait on Gussie's coat-tail and gave it a yank.

"Let go my coat, you bwute," he said, meaning Chollie, but addressing the lock-box.

At the same time a big brindle sooner pup got onto Chollie's coat-tail with its toothsome tag.

"Stop pulling me, you hawid baw," cried the lawyer's clerk.

Then they both got up.

Of course they bumped heads, and that made them still more mad.

It made the dogs mad, too, for the meat was yanked away from them.

"Get out of here!" yelled the fat man, kicking the bull pup.

The B. P. thought that Chollie was the offender, and started to chew his leg.



"Ow! stop that, you loafah!" he yelled, meaning Gussie.

The latter was having lots of fun all by himself.

The minute he stood up all the dogs began jumping at him.

"Go away, you hawid bwute!" he yelled, this time meaning a dog.

Chollie took the remark as intended for himself.

"Bwute, yaw ownself," he sputtered. "I won't go away till I get weady. Get down, you cur!"

The cur was a real cur and not Gussie.

Gussie thought he was meant, and was mad.

Meanwhile, the dogs were jumping all over him, spilling his letters, tearing his clothes, and making things generally lively.

Every time he stooped to pick up something he had dropped the purps would leap on him, and try to get at that meat.

Imagine the rumpus this caused in a place crowded by men, women and boys.

Chollie tried to get out, but Gussie suddenly ran his head into his stomach in getting up suddenly, and then down he went.

Tom and Ned were enjoying the picnic in the doorway.

"Ain't it prime?" said Tom.

"First chop," answered Ned.

The fat man already mentioned, having been upset twice by the two dudes in endeavoring to secure his mail, now got very mad.

"Get out of here, you two fools!" he yelled, grabbing each by the collar.

Then he hustled them both out at the big front door.

Then the fun really began.

## PART XII.

**T**WO dudes came flying out of the Hunterdon G. P. O., impelled by the foot of a very fat and very mad old man.

Several dogs came out also, and when the dudes ran down the street the dogs ran after them.

Attached to the tail of the light overcoat worn by each dude was a big fish-hook, and on the shaft of each hook was a piece of meat, the hook being in the cloth.

That was the attraction that caused the dogs to follow the dudes.

A big, overgrown, brindle bull-pup flew after Chollie, grabbed the bit of meat and hung on with the tenacity characteristic of his breed.

Chollie looked over his left shoulder, saw the dog and bolted faster than ever.

The dog flew right out straight, but never let go.

Chollie expected to be chewed up by the ravenous beast and so ran all the faster.

Gussie had to put in the big ticks in the running line, too.

He had four or five dogs following him at full speed, and all yelping like the very mischief.

Mr. Robinson was so frightened that he ran right by the drug store before he knew where he was. It was too late to turn back with all those dogs after him.

He therefore concluded to go around the block and watch his chance when he reached the store again.

In going around the corner, however, he met with a slight mischance.

Pompey Snowdrop, the whitewasher, was coming along the side street with a pail of wash on his head.

Before he knew where he was somebody ran slap against him at railroad speed.

The colored gentleman gasped, lost his balance, and sat down.

The pail of whitewash lost its balance also.

It turned a somersault and fell on Gussie's head, bottom up, of course.

That dude was going so fast that a trifling affair like a two-hundred-pound coon had no effect upon his progress.

He kept right on, tripped over the sitting coon, and landed on the walk ten feet ahead and on his head.

When he got up he was as white as kalsomine could make him, from his curly bangs to the end of his tooth-pick shoes.

"Whoa! Wha' de mattah?" asked the moke.

He thought that the upper end of his backbone must be sticking out two feet above his head.

Gussie was still endeavoring to wipe the whitening out of his eyes, when Pompey got up and caught sight of him.

Just then the dogs, having been at first thrown off the scent, returned to the fray.

The biggest of them ran between Pompey's legs, and then for the second time great Pompey fell.

"G'out o' yer! Wha' yo' doin', anyhow?" he demanded, kicking out with his big feet.

"You vulgah fellah!" cried poor Gussie, "you have ruined my clothes."

"Reckon yo've spilled dat pail o' whitewash, yo' clumsy fellah. Couldn't yo' see whar yo' was gwine—h'm?"

Just then a couple of dogs began to fight for the dude's coat-tails.

"Get out!" yelled Gussie. "What's the mattah with all the dawgs this mawning?"

One of the canine brutes had succeeded in getting away with the piece of meat, and he now fled, followed by all the rest.

Gussie peeled off his overcoat and held it up, all dripping whitewash.

"You've ruined it!" he gasped. "Is that what you call a coat of whitewash?"

Pompey Snowdrop did not catch onto the covert witticism contained in this remark.

He was thinking of other matters.

"Hi dere, you monkey!" he yelled, grabbing up his pail, "don't yo' go lettin' all dat wash go to waste. Let it dreen in de pail, can't yo'? Habn' yo' got no sense?"

If he hadn't that dude did not care to be told so by a common coon.

"Yaw a saucy fellah," he remarked, "and I have a good mind to have you awested for assault."

"Ain' no salt in dat whitewash. It am puf-fekly fresh. Ain' no ha'm in lettin' it dreen in de pail, I guess."

"It's ruined," muttered the poor dude, walking sadly away, holding the garment at arm's length.

A plentiful application of cold water brought it out all right, however, and the same remedy was applied to the rest of his wardrobe.

Chollie Smith, in the meantime, had bounced into the lawyer's office head first, carrying the bull pup with him.

Griggs had a horror of dogs, and began to yell murder as soon as Chollie appeared.

The poor dude had tumbled over a chair, and now lay on the floor gasping for breath.

The dog having secured the meat, was now sitting in a corner eating it contentedly.

"Take that dog out of here," yelled Griggs.

"He isn't mine," mumbled Chollie, getting up.

"What did you bring him in here for, if he wasn't yours?"

"I didn't bring him in, he came."

"Well, what made you let him? Take him out."

Chollie looked at the dog and trembled.

The creature looked altogether too savage to tackle.

"Put him out!" howled Griggs.

"Ye-es," and Chollie went to the door and opened it.

Out went that pup like a flash, being as much frightened as the dude was.

The result of his sudden exit was to upset Chollie on the sidewalk, and cause everybody on the street to roar.

Old Griggs stormed and scolded, called Chollie an idiot, and asked for his letters.

"I left 'em in the office, an old man threw me out, and then the dog wan aftah me," stammered the poor fellow.

"Go after them, you donkey, and if any are lost I'll horsewhip you," growled Griggs.

Chollie got the letters, but in the interim the fat man came in and complained of him to Griggs.

"The young puppy was skylarking in the office with another young puppy, that fool Robinson, in the drug store, and they threw me down. Those two fellows are a nuisance," said the fat man.

"I will see that he is spoken to on the subject," said Griggs, the fat man being one of his best clients.

So poor Chollie got another laying out, though what it was for he had no idea.

He found the fish hook in his overcoat tails, but did not know how it came there, and in fact never once tumbled to the little racket which Tom and Ned had worked upon him and his twin slim.

Gussie did not find the hook in his coat, but the tailor who cleaned it did and swore to get square with him.

He got caught, and jumped at once to the conclusion that the dude had purposely left the hook where he had found it.

"I'll fix that dude for that," remarked Mr. Snips.

"He can't play me for a sucker, if he did catch me with a hook."

When Gussie came after the coat, which only happened when the dude had scraped up enough money to pay for it, Snips being a "no trust" sort of fellow, the tailor said, smilingly:

"There, Mr. Robinson, I guess you'll find that coat a better fit than it was before. Try it on."

Gussie tried it on and stood in front of a big mirror to admire himself.

"Sit down," said Snips, "and observe how well it fits either way, standing or sitting."

Gussie sat down.

Then he wished he had remained sitting.

He jumped up as if shot, rubbed his leg and exclaimed:

"Gweat hevvins, man! You mustn't have pins sticking in your chaihahs like that, don't ye know."

"Did you get a pin in you, Mr. Robinson?" asked Snips very blandly.

"A pin! Gweat hevvins, I think it must have been a wegular spike," and Gussie rubbed himself again.

"I don't see anything," said Snips, looking at the chair which the dude had just vacated.

Gussie looked also, first with and then without his quizzing glass.

"I don't see anything," he observed. "Do you?"

"No, nothing. Maybe you only imagined it."

"Gweat guns! I haven't imagination enough to make me jump thwee feet out of a chaihah, old chappie."

"No?"

"Of cawse not. Oh, I say, I've got it!" he suddenly cried, a look of intelligence not often seen there coming into his face.

"What, the pin?"

"No, but an ideah."

"Well, well, that's worth mentioning, I'm sure. You don't often have 'em, do you?"

"You've left a needle sticking in the top-coat, old chappie," said Gussie, ignoring the little innuendo, "and it stuck into me, don't ye know."

"Oh, is that it?"

"Yas, I think it must be."

"Well, let's see if I can find it."

He did find it for a fact—and also Gussie.

That roguish chap of a little tailor knew well enough where the spike was.

He put his hand on it at once and drove it half an inch into the dude's anatomy.

"Is that it?"

"Gweat hevvins, yes, stop it!" yelled Gussie, jumping six feet, falling over a chair and then sitting right down on the sharp thing again.

"Ow! theah it is once maw!" he howled, getting up. "Faw mawey sake what is it?"

He peeled off the coat, and Snips extracted a big overgrown fish-hook, placed in such a fashion in the tail as to prod a fellow every time he sat down.

"Gweat gwief! how did that get in there?" demanded the puzzled dude.

"Put there to catch suckers," said Snips.

"You caught me, and then I went fishing for flats and nabbed you. Turn about is fair play. See?"

"No, I don't see," muttered the abused slim. "I didn't put that fish-hook theah. Why should I? It isn't good fowm to go fishing this time of yeah."

"Well, we're quits anyhow," chuckled Snips. "You won't play any more tricks on me again in hurry, I don't think."

"You mean you do think I won't, don't you, chappie?"

"Yes, I don't think you will, that's the same, ain't it? I ain't much on grammar, but I can play a joke as well as the next fool. See?"

"Yas, I see, yaw a fool, of cawse. It don't wequiah glawses to see that, old chappie."

Then Gussie got out of the shop before getting into his coat, for after such a remark it was safer outside than in.

"H'm! He ain't so big a fool as he looks, though he's big enough, goodness knows," muttered Snips. "Anyhow, I got square on him, and charged him double what the job was worth."

"It's all that Smith fellah's fault," remarked Gussie, as he walked back to the drug store.

"He put that hook in the top-coat that day in the post office. I wish I knew whether he can box or not. If I was shaw he couldn't, I'd take a wound out of him just to show him I ain't to be twified with, don't ye know."

That gave him an idea, and he made up his mind to take lessons in the manly art of knocking out, and, when he was proficient, give his rival a setting down.



"Quite a good idea, don't ye know!" he mused. "I'll ask Ned if he knows anybody to go to. He's shaw to be posted."

That very afternoon he called Ned New into the shop when old Bolus was out, treated his chum to soda, and said:

"Oh, I say, Ned, old chappie," he suddenly exclaimed, "do you know how to box?"

"Do I?" chuckled Edward. "Well, rather. Do you want to try a round with me?"

"Not now, old chappie, but I'd like to learn, don't ye know. Could you give me lessons?"

A wicked idea came into that young fellow's head.

In fact, such things were always getting in there for some reason.

"They won't hawt you. They're vewy mild, baw Jove."

"I don't smoke at all, Chollie."

"Aw, I suppose you'll lawn when yaw a man like me?"

"If I thought there was any danger of my ever being like you," thought Tom, "I'd go drown myself this instant."

"I suppose so," he answered, and then he and the dude sauntered leisurely down the street, Chollie putting on his gloves and Tom taking in the sights.

"Seen Robinson lately, Chollie?" asked the young joker presently.

"I nevah look at the pawson you speak of," said Chollie, elevating his nose.

"No? Oh, I thought you did."

"I should say he hadn't as much style as I, deah boy," he rejoined, complacently. "He nevah could have if he lived a hundwed yahs, baw Jove."

"Of course not."

Just then Tom caught sight of a waddling Mongolian approaching them, carrying a big clothes-basket under his arm.

Tom was on the outside, next to the curb, Chollie being on the inside, as was also the approaching Celestial.

Wun Bum was the principal washee-washee man of the town, and indeed the only one who was making any money.

He hired several other Chinamen to help him, charged the highest prices for his work,



Just as Chollie and Wun Bum were back to back he reached out his arm, seized the dangling pig-tail and gave it a terrible yank.

"Well, I don't know as I am smart enough myself to do that," he replied, as if pondering upon the matter, "but I know a first-rate teacher."

"Do you weally, old chappie?"

"Oh, yes, he's tip-top!"

"Won't he chawge a gweat deal, old chapie?" asked Gussie, rather doubtfully.

"Oh, no, not at all. He's very reasonable. I'll speak to him, and he'll charge you the same as he does me."

"How much is that?"

"A dollar to show you all he knows, no matter how long it takes."

"That's all wight. I'll begin at once."

"Very well. I'll let you know as soon as I can see him myself," and Ned smiled as he thought of the fun ahead.

Tom Trust coming down to the center this same afternoon, school being out, met Chollie Smith just coming from the office.

"Aw, Tom, deah boy, how do?" said the dude, with a placid smile.

"First rate, old man. You're looking fine to-day. Feel well?"

"As well as can be expected, Tom, deah boy. Wheah aw you going?"

"Nowhere in particular. I'll go with if you if you like."

"Thanks, deah boy, vewy much. I'm just going out faw a stwoll. Have a cigarette?"

"No, thanks. I don't indulge."

"No, sah. I meahly am awaw that he exists, that is all. I am not the least intewested in the fellow."

"You didn't hear then that he wears a real London suit?"

"I don't caiah what he weahs, deah boy."

"Well, it's a real English walking suit, made in London and very stylish."

"London clothes aw no longah good fawm, me boy. The Fwench goods collah the bake-wy now."

"Yes, and he wears real cat's eye pearls in his shirt front."

"Jewelwy is going out of fashion, deah boy; in fact, it's vewy vulgah," said Chollie.

He pretended to be indifferent, but all the time he was in a rage of jealousy to think that his hated rival possessed the very things that he desired most.

"Oh, yes, and they say he carries a dog head cane with real rubies for eyes," continued Tom, with the intention of still further exciting Chollie's envy.

"He's a puppy his own self, and he'd bettah take his own head to put on a stick, baw Jove."

"Still, I don't think he is half so stylish as you, old man," said the tormenting Tom.

That little speech just thumped the nail on the nut.

Chollie was awfully pleased at this avowal, although he pretended it was no news to him.

and trusted no one, not even the cashier of the bank.

Come to think of it, however, there was nothing very strange in that.

Tom spotted Wun Bum, and at once thought of a dandy snap.

The heathen wore a blue blouse and baggy trousers, felt shoes, and broad-brimmed felt hat, like all the high-toned Chinese, who despise the ways of the Melican man, and will not copy his dress.

"Get on to the heathen," said Tom. "You don't let them iron your shirts, do you, old man?"

"No, I wouldn't do anything so vulgah," said the dude.

It was true enough that he did not put his laundry work out to the Chinese.

Not because it was vulgar, however.

Wun Bum was too rigid an adherent to the rule of "no money, no washee," to suit him.

He had found that the Chinaman's first, last and only maxim was "No trust," and this proved altogether too inconvenient for our dude.

The Celestial came along with his habitual smile, but neither Tom nor Chollie paid any attention to him.

Tom did not so that he could work his little gag, and Chollie abstained from pride.

As the Chinaman passed, Tom caught on to a very important circumstance.



Wun Bum's pig-tail hung down upon his back instead of being curled up around his head under his hat.

What could that idiotic Mongolian have been thinking of?

It was like putting one's head in a lion's mouth.

Tom's plan was formed instantly.

Just as Chollie and Wun Bum were back to back he reached out his arm, seized the dangling pig-tail and gave it a terrible yank.

Wasn't there trouble then?

Don't speak about it!

### PART XIII.

**T**OM TRUST pulled the Chinaman's pigtail for all he knew how, and with an astonishing result.

In the first place Wun Bum came flying backward with a yell, and struck against the dude walking at Tom's side.

The heathen struck the dude with the force of a cannon ball.

The big basket of clothes also took Chollie in the neck, and maybe the Chinaman's fist as well.

At any rate, down sat the dude in the basket with the force of an avalanche.

If he had worn false teeth they would have been jolted out of his mouth by the concussion.

Wun Bum swung around like a top, his basket flying one way and he the other.

When he got to his feet he glared at Chollie, raised his foot threateningly and said:

"Melican dude heap big fool, you bet. What for you pullee Chineeman's piggee tail likee dat. Me gleat mind smashee you jaw."

"Don't you daw touch me, you impudent Chinaman," said Chollie, still sitting down.

Tom stood calmly by and took in the circus.

He looked as innocent as a sucking pig, and nobody thought of accusing him.

"Pullee my hair, me punchee you snoot, kickee you eye lout, splose," growled Wun Bum.

"Who pulled your hair, fellah?" demanded Chollie.

"Melican dude, lawler's elland boy, sittee on walk."

"It's a lie! I never pulled it, you ignowant savage."

"Tellee lie self. Punchee snoot for dat. Dudee no good, smokee cigalettes, no gottee blains, allee same no good like lallee dog."

"Don't you dare tell me I lie, you bwute."

"Tellee one, flee, six times. You no likee? Gettee up, and take lound outee me, thlen."

That was a fair enough invite, in all conscience.

Chollie was disposed to decline without thanks, however.

If he did not want to fight, though, Wun Bum did.

"Makee Chineeman heap big fool, pullee hair, makee wash allee mud. Me punchee head."

"I nevah did anything," sputtered Chollie.

"You fell against me, and upset the clothes yawself."

"Wun Bum tellee stloly, so be?" said the Mongol, threateningly.

"Yas, yaw a big liah, that's what yaw."

"Gettee up, me bleakee nose," and Wun Bum struck a fighting attitude, and began dancing around Chollie, watching for him to arise.

Chollie was not disposed to get up, however.

He sat on the cold, cold stones in the spot where he originally fell, and nothing, apparently, could induce him to leave it.

"No gettee up, me kickee," muttered Wun Bum.

"I won't get up till I get good and weady," defiantly answered the dude.

"Me kickee tlousee off no gettee up!" cried the Asiatic.

He gave Chollie one dandy kick behind, which made the dude howl and begin to cry.

Then Tom interposed. It was all fun to him, but he preferred fair play.

"Hold on, John, none of that!" he cried.

"Fair play, you know."

"What dat?"

"You can't hit a man when he is down."

"What for he no gettee lup? Me no can punchee on ee sidelawk."

"You must give him a chance to get up."

"All light. Me waittee. Hully up, Lankee Doodee."

Chollie hurried about as rapidly as frozen molasses.

"Hully!" cried Bum.

"Shawn't," muttered Chollie.

"Oh, I say, Chollie," said Tom. "You can lick the heathen. Get up and take a round out of him."

"I wouldn't soil me hands on the bwute."

"Oh, that's all right. You can wash 'em again, can't you?"

"It's against my pwinciples to fight with a low fellah like that."

"Yes, I know, but he has insulted you."

"Well, if he takes it back I won't injaw him."

"How's that, John? Do you take back what you said about my friend?"

"Takee back not'n. Me wantee fight."

"You won't apologize?"

"No sabee dat, me lickee fellae on ee glound."

"You see, he won't apologize," said Tom.

"You'll have to chastise him at once."

"But I pwomised not to fight," blubbered Chollie. "when I joined the Sunday school, deah boy."

Tom wanted to laugh at the ridiculousness of this excuse, but concluded not to.

"Oh, come on; the superintendent won't know it."

"But I cahn't fight without boxing gloves, deah boy."

"Him flaid!" chuckled Wun Bum. "He no fightee lilly chickee; him no good."

"There's another insult, old man," said Tom, earnestly. "You won't stand that, certainly?"

"Him no standee 'tall," laughed Wun Bum; "him sittee down allee time, catchee cold, fleeze to ee glound."

"Cahn't you fight the beggah faw me, deah boy?" wailed Chollie.

"Do you want to fight, John?" asked Tom.

"Yeppe, me leady allee time; Lankee Doodle no gettee lup."

"Will you fight me instead of him?"

"Me no gottee nothing aglen you, you goodee fellae; glasse eye, me likee you flust late—me lickee fellae down lere."

"Then you won't fight me?"

"Nopee," said Wun Bum very decidedly.

He had sized Tom up, and felt assured that the boy could do him up.

He was as certain that he could knock out the dude. Hence his friendliness to Tom.

"Me no fightee you, me fightee odee fellae," he persisted.

"Here's a deadlock for you," mused Tom. "I wish they would fight. It would be as funny as a circus."

The deadlock might have lasted until midnight, had not events suddenly taken a new turn.

Along came a lot of the worst gang of boys the town could boast of.

They got on to the overturned basket in a jiffy.

"Hey, fellers, let's get away wid der Chineser's washin'," cried one.

"Yare, les' help him pick it up."

"My eye, dis is der best yet."

Thereupon those eastern hoodlums swept down upon the Chinaman's washing, and began to get away with it bodily.

That was too much for Wun Bum.

He could stand being prevented from walloping the dude, but he couldn't let himself be robbed in that wholesale fashion.

He forgot all about the dude, and started in pursuit of his runaway linen.

He overhauled one young rooster who had annexed two clean shirts and a pile of collars, and proceeded to shake him.

The youth dropped his booty and skipped out at once.

Then Wun Bum caught onto a fellow with a lot more shirts, and blackened both of his eyes as a way of inducing him to surrender his plunder.

The rest of the thieves dropped the cuffs they had collared, and slid out with great celerity.

Wun Bum had to collect his wash, however, and that took time.

It was a good deal more than Chollie Smith required, however.

He was upon his feet the moment Wun Bum left him.

He picked up his hat and went sailing down the street before you could mention the name of Nebuchadnezzar backward.

Even Tom was not quick enough to stop him.

"Well, well! of all the 'fraid cats I ever saw, he collars the cruller," laughed Tom, as he saw Chollie's coat-tails disappear around a corner.

Chollie went as if he had been fired out of a cannon.

He had vanished before Wun Bum had overhauled the first pirate.

"Well, this is pretty funny," chuckled Tom, "though not in the way I expected. I wanted to see those two gillies try a round with each other. It would have been fun alive."

Wun Bum, having recovered his wash, considerably the worse for wear, returned to where he had left the dude.

"Where be?" he asked blandly.

"Where is who, you moon-eyed misfit?" laughed Tom.

"Dudee."

"Gone to catch a train."

"Him 'flaid, him no fightee like lilly looster."

"Oh, you wait here till he comes back and you'll see how he will paralyze you."

"Me no b'lieve. Lun alay, allee same like cow. No gottee splunk. No good, allee same evly odee Melican man."

"Maybe you think I'm no good?" said Tom, putting up his fives.

"You bully bloy, glasse eye, legalah blick; me no hurtee you."

"Oh, come on. I'd just as lief lick you as not."

"No gottee time," muttered Bum, and away he waddled, the big basket under his arm, and making the best time on record.

"Well, this is a picnic," he mused, and then he went off to find Ned and tell him all about the sparring match that did not come off.

The latter was arranging for another sparring match between Gussie and a certain tough, not unknown to the gentle reader.

He had promised to bring the teacher up to the dude's room that evening, when they would have a little practice.

Ned was on hand with his friend Jimmy Jones, and so was Tom, for he wanted to see the fun as well as the next fellow.

The fun did not eventuate.

The sparring match was postponed.

Ned had hoped that Jimmy would not be recognized.

He ought to have known better.

The minute he came into the room Gussie tumbled.

He likewise fled.

The door was not convenient, of course.

He took a window, which fortunately happened to be partly open.

He dashed it up and jumped out.

There was a little shed a foot or so below.

He landed on this safe and sound.

Then he ran along the shed and jumped upon a lower one at the end of the first.

From here he jumped to the ground.

Then he dusted.

The picnic party got left.

"Sold," said Jimmy Jones. "If it was anybody else, I'd spit on me hands, but you're friends o' mine an' I won't."

"This is the time we got dished, Edward," remarked Tom, with a quiet grin.

"Right you are, Thomas."

"Let's mope," said Jimmy Jones.

They moped.

Poor Gussie did not dare go back to the house till time to close up, and then he entered with fear and trembling.

Nobody collared him, however, and he heaved a sigh of relief as he locked the door, and proceeded to retire to the combination of straw mattress, hair pillows and rheumatic springs, known as his downy couch.

Tom and Ned felt a little sore over their defeat, but it served them right for trying to work off such an antediluvian gag as that one on the dude.

However, both Chollie and Gussie were able to get themselves into trouble without the boys' assistance.

It wasn't long before they did so in elegant shape.

A day or two subsequent to the little racket with Wun Bum Gussie was sent to carry some medicine to old Mrs. Higginbottom at the other end of the town.

He was obliged to pass through the poorer quarter of the place, and had saturated himself with carbolic acid as a preventive against small pox and other infectious diseases which popular superstition had credited that locality with having.

On the way he had to pass the laundry establishment of Wun Bum, that industrious individual being at work just then.

Now it so happened that Chollie Smith had been sent down into the same neighborhood a short time before.

Chollie, on his return, passed Wun Bum's place and the Chinaman saw him.

His anger was aroused forthwith.



"Me killee dudee," he remarked, leaving the washtub.

When he went to the door Chollie had vanished.

"Come aglen, maybe," muttered Bum, going inside.

Then he provided himself with a big pail brim full of dirty water and soapsuds.

When he went to the door again he saw the dude returning.

At any rate, he thought it was the same.

It wasn't the dude, however.

It was another of the same tribe, though.

It was Gussie.

Chollie had seen him coming, and had turned down a side street to avoid meeting him.

Then Gussie walked into the laundry very mad.

"Glood mo'nin'. You wantee shirtee washee, collee, cuffee? Me do belly cheap."

"No, sah. I don't want nothing washed. I want to know who thwew the watah on me just now."

Wun Bum looked as innocent as a baby.

"I say, I want to know why you thwew watah on me," repeated the dudelet.

"Me no 'stand Melican talkee," said the washerman.

Gussie did not believe this.

"What made you thwow that watah on me?" he demanded.

"Me no 'stand."

Chollie was coming up the little stoop.

He had to collect the rent from the Widdy Mulligan, who lived just over the laundry.

Wun Bum had not expected this.

The result was that not only did Chollie get a ducking, but he also caught Wun Bum in the act.

He was swept clean off the stoop by the flood.

He brought up at the curb, and sat there looking the picture of distress.

If Gussie could have seen him, how he would have chuckled.

One never feels one's misfortune so keenly when he finds that it is shared with some other fellow.



Wun Bum swung around like a top, his basket flying one way and he the other. When he got to his feet he glared at Chollie, raised his foot threateningly and said: "Melican dude heap big fool, you bet. What for you pullee Chineeman's piggee tail likee dat?"

It was all the same to the Chinaman, however.

Just as Gussie was abreast of the wash-house Bum dashed out, pail in hand.

Ostensibly he meant to throw the water into the gutter.

As a matter of fact he soused the dude from head to foot.

Poor Gussie gasped for breath, while the heathen Chinese stood on the stoop and chuckled.

"Hi-hi! Me gettee sclare," he muttered. "Dudee pullee pigetail! Me chuckee watee over he! Goodee joke!"

Then he suddenly realized that it wasn't his dude at all.

"Belly funny!" he laughed, as he darted into the wash-house and went to work.

Gussie recovered his breath, looked around, and saw Wun Bum in the laundry, hard at work over a washtub.

"I say, you Chinese pawson, what faw you thwow watah ovah me?" he demanded, in a loud tone.

Wun Bum went right on with his work.

Gussie repeated the question in a louder tone.

Wun Bum was evidently very hard of hearing.

He paid no attention to the slim.

"Yes, you do. What made thwow watah ovah me just now?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"Me no chuckee."

"Yas, you did."

"Me no leabee shop."

"Yaw a liah! I saw you."

"Callee me stoly tellee, me bleakee you jaw."

"Yaw not able, you misewable wat eatah."

"You see."

With that Bum grabbed up a dipper, plunged it into the tub and then let Gussie have the contents right in the neck.

That satisfied the dude.

The fight was all washed out of him by that time.

He fled, howling dismally.

Wun Bum hadn't had so much fun since he had been in town.

He just sat down and howled.

Presently he went to the door and looked out.

The dude was coming back.

This time it was Chollie.

He had forgotten something in his hurry, and had to come back.

Wun Bum was waiting for him.

He filled the pail once more, and rushed out.

"You hawid fellah!" cried my friend Smith, as soon as he could get his breath.

As for Wun Bum, the thing was so funny that he never thought of retreating.

He just stood there, pail in hand, and shrieked.

It's funny how some people can appreciate a joke, while others see nothing to laugh at.

Wun Bum thought this was the best joke of the season.

Chollie Smith failed to see where the laugh came in.

"It's that hawid Chinaman again," he muttered. "If I had known he lived heah I would have told old Gwiggs to do his own ewands."

The heathen had by this time fully recognized the dude as the fellow who had pulled his queue, as he supposed.

"Plenty heap dude," he muttered. "Woodee fullee. Me catchee light one dis time, so be. Hi-hi, nevee catchee so muchee fun."

It may easily be supposed that Chollie did not approve of this hilarity on the part of the Chinaman.

In fact, it made him very much mad.

Thoughts of revenge began at once to enter his heart.

It was bad enough to have dirty water thrown over him.

It was worse to be laughed at afterward.



Consequently, he at once began to meditate revenge.

Without stopping to think of the possible consequences, but thinking only of getting hunk, Chollie grabbed up the biggest stone he could find.

Then he aimed at the Chinaman and let drive!

Smash!

The missile missed the Chinese and went through the window.

Chollie tried again.

Once more the glass suffered, another pane being smashed.

Then it was Wun Bum's turn to fail to appreciate the joke.

Instead of laughing, he got mad.

Rushing inside, he grabbed up a scrubbing board and dashed out into the street.

Chollie fled, not caring to be boarded by a heathen.

When one dude ran away, another turned up.

Gussie, having finished up with old Mrs. Higginbottom, was coming back, hoping that Wun Bum would not see him.

The Chinaman did not know the difference.

He sailed into Gussie and began pounding him on the head with the scrubbing board in great style.

Truly those two dudes were very much mixed up that day.

#### PART XIV.

**A**N angry Chinaman, thinking to lick Chollie Smith, had suddenly dashed out upon Gussie Robinson and began belting him over the head with a scrubbing board.

However, Gussie had offended him not long before, and so it was all right.

There was no knowing how long Gussie's head might have stood that sort of thing if the wash-board hadn't suddenly gone all to smash.

It was one of those things of which thousands are made by contract, and of course it could not be expected to stand any such violent usage as that.

"Hi-yah! allee bloke up," muttered the heathen.

That gave Gussie a chance to light out, and he improved it. What he knew about China was enough to last him a week.

He faded away as rapidly as possible, and resolved to keep out of that region hereafter.

Chollie had had a lesson also, and he intended to profit by it.

"It's all the fault of that Wobinson fellah, anyway," he observed. "I weally think the howid Chinaman took me faw him. Wathah complimentary to Wobinson, but awfully wough on me, baw Jove!"

Not very long after this winter set in, and the Academy boys and Seminary girls had slathers of fun.

There were parties and bees of all kinds, skating, coasting, straw rides and a dozen other kinds of sports, in all of which both the boys and the girls took a lively interest.

The two dudes liked the cold weather for various reasons.

People would get sick, and then old Bolus had more practice, and Gussie had a better chance to knock down on the cash drawer.

Then, too, people slipped on the ice, brought suits for damages and went to Griggs, and Chollie came in for many little fees.

The principal reason that those dudes liked the winter was that they could wear long, stylish ulsters, which would cover any amount of ragged or patched clothes, and give the owners a chance to save their best for warmer days.

So you see the winter has as many advantages as most seasons.

Well, the winter went along in its own sweet way as winters do, regardless of people's feelings, and the boys made the most of it.

Soon after New Year's something funny happened.

The two dudes made up again.

It wasn't the result of New Year resolutions either.

In that case the friendship would not have lasted twenty-four hours.

There wasn't any celebration of the affair this time either.

The slims evidently recognized that they had made howling idiots of themselves on the occasion of the last celebration.

Consequently they meant to avoid any such exhibition of themselves this time.

No, it all came about very nicely and unexpectedly, and this is how it happened:

The dudes were invited to a party and went. They didn't take any girls with them, simply because they couldn't get any in season.

Consequently, they could stay as long as they liked, dance when they chose, and go home alone.

It was a blessing to the wall-flowers, their being there, for they danced with the lonely girls, because all others were in demand.

There was a smoking-room up-stairs, and thither they repaired, after supper, occupying opposite corners.

The place was so attractive that when they finally left it they found that everybody but themselves had departed.

"Weally, I had no ideah: it was so late," said Chollie, to the hostess, as he went in to take leave. "Chawming evening, don't ye know. Thank you, evah so much."

"Awfully glad I came," said Gussie, a moment later. "Nevah had such a delightful time befaw."

There were two hats on the rack when the dudes went to get their dicers.

They already had their coats on, their sticks being under their arms.

Chollie took one hat, and Gussie swiped the other, the man of the house looking on.

"Baw Jove, I believe somebody has taken my hat," said Chollie. "This is too small, don't ye know?"

"I nevah can weah this hat, it's a gweat deal too lawge," said Gussie to the mirror. "Somebody has taken me hat, I do believe."

"Perhaps you two have changed," said the host, with a smile.

Then Chollie looked in the hat he had taken, and saw Gussie's initials worked in red on a white satin band.

Of course he couldn't say anything while the man of the house was around.

It would never do to quarrel under such circumstances.

"Pawhaps we have changed," he said. "Yas, baw Jove, so we have. This hat is yours, Wobinson."

"And this is yaws," said Gussie. "It's vewy stwange. I was shaw I put me hat on that vewy nail."

"Pawhaps some pawson accidentally knocked them down, don't yer know. I was shaw mine was on this peg."

"Glad you found it out so soon," said the gentleman of the house. "It's awkward trying to find your hat sometimes. I hate to have anything of that kind happen in my house."

"It's awkwawd anywheah," remarked Chollie, changing hats with Gussie.

"You two will go home together, I suppose?" said the host. "Have a cigar, won't you? Glad you enjoyed yourselves, and glad the hats proved to be your own."

What could the two slims say to that?

They had not intended to accompany one another, but now it seemed quite a good idea.

The hour was late, the road was lonely, they had a couple of good cigars to smoke, and there wasn't anybody else going their way.

Of course they would have to start out together, for it would be very rude to quarrel before their host.

"Yas, we do go the same way," said Chollie, "that is, as faw as the wailwoad twack."

"Well, good-night. Call again soon."

The dudes had their cigars lighted, and as they went away they walked together till the door was shut.

For a block or two neither said a word.

Then Chollie, puffing out a big cloud of smoke, remarked:

"Vewy fine cigahs, awn't they?"

"Vewy. Old Bolus cahn't keep any like 'em."

Then there was silence for a few minutes.

"Wathah odd ouah getting each othah's hats, wasn't it?" asked Gussie.

"Deuced queah. Nevah thought I had yaw hat."

"Naw I that I had yaws. Vewy singulah."

Then again there was silence, and both dudes puffed vigorously at their cigars.

Finally Chollie remarked:

"Vewy nice affaiah, wasn't it?"

"Splendid."

"Old Jones got lots of money, I guess."

"Yas, so I should pwesume."

"Lots of nice guyls to dawnee with, too, baw Jove."

"Yas, and no bothaw about seeing them home, don't ye know."

"Guyls aw an awful baw, sometimes, don't you think?"

"Oh, yas, positively awful. I'm glad I haven't any sistah."

"He, he, so'm I, baw Jove. They aw wawse than little bwothahs."

"Wathah lonesome this woad, isn't it?"

"It would be without company—vewy lonesome."

"Vewy good cigahs, these?"

"Yas, vewy."

"Awfully nice pahty, wasn't it?"

"Awful."

"Fine fellah, Jones?"

"Deuced."

"Wish this cigah would lahst longah. It's awfully good."

"Yas, vewy."

Then the talk stopped and the dudes walked on in silence.

It was cold, they had a long walk before them, and they both wished they were at home.

Pretty soon they reached the hotel, which was open and looked particularly warm and cozy.

"Won't you come in and have anothah cigah?" asked Gussie. "Jenkins keeps pwetty faiah ones."

"Don't mind if I do."

There was nothing said about swearing an eternal friendship or drinking each other's health, or any such rubbish.

They just kind of made it up without any fuss or feathers.

Gussie treated to cigars and Chollie stood some hot spiced cider, which made them feel delightfully warm and comfortable, without being at all wicked.

In fact they both had a vivid recollection of having made fools of themselves before, and they fought shy of doing it again.

They did not call for cocktails, nor try to play billiards, but behaved themselves like two sedate old duffers who had been friends for fifty years.

Finally, being warmed through, they left the hotel and moved onward.

At the post office they separated and shook hands.

"Good-night, Chollie—see you to-morrow."

"Good-night, Gussie, deah boy. Take caiah of yawself."

The next day, when they met, those dudes smiled and chinned away as sociably as you please.

Tom and Ned met them in the afternoon, walking together like old chums.

"Hallo, fellows!" said Tom. "Fine day for the race, isn't it?"

"What wace is that, deah boy?" asked Chollie, biting at that time-honored gag.

"He means the human wace," said Gussie. "He's a vegulah jokah, that Tom Twust. Don't you mind him, old chappie."

"Ha-ha! vewy funny. Nevah hawd it befaw, 'pon honah. Is that the latest fwom London?"

"Well, if it is, they'd better get a new stock," chuckled Ned.

Then the boys went one way and the dudes another, while Tom remarked to Ned:

"The dudes have apparently made up again, Ned."

"Yes, sir, and without our knowing anything about it."

"Guess we must be clear behind the age old man."

"Do you suppose that will put an end to our little rackets?"

"Not a bit. Fact is, it'll be easier than it was before."

"Then let us hope that they will continue to be friends."

"By all means."

"But how do you suppose it all came about?"

"Don't ask me."

"They were at the party last night."

"Yes, and stayed up-stairs most of the time."

"That's when they must have made up and buried the hatchet."

"Don't believe they went on a racket then."

"Guess not. The last one hasn't grown cold yet."

"Didn't we roast them that time?"

"Bet your boots."

"And won't we do it again?"

"Well, I should grunt!"

On the Saturday afternoon following, a few days later, Tom, Ned, and a lot of the academy and town boys, went off to the river to skate.

Chollie and Gussie were asked to go along, and they joyfully accepted, being still firm friends, though everybody wondered at it.

The two slims had made up once before, it will be remembered, the friendship lasting as



long as three hours, and it had naturally been expected that their present love for one another would be of equally brief duration.

Well, they promised to go along, and all hands expected to have a lot of fun.

Everybody was provided with skates, and it was presumed that all knew how to use them.

There had been a thaw a day or so before this, and then it had come up as cold as Greenland.

The result was that the river, which had been covered with a depth of water of several inches over the ice, was now provided with a clean sheet of good, firm ice, as clear as glass and as hard as a rock.

Then he put himself in communication with Ned and revealed the direful design of the dudes.

"Snap the whip, hey, and with us for the lash," laughed Ned. "You and I know a trick that beats that one, don't we, Thomas?"

"You can wager your dulcet existence we do, my boy."

Presently when the whole crowd got on their skates, they began gliding up and down, racing, cutting fancy figures on the ice, and all that sort of thing.

"Oh, I say, boys, let's play 'snap the whip?'" It's awfully jolly fun, don't ye know," said Gussie.

Tom winked at Ned, and vice versa.

"All right, old man," said Tom. "Come on,

If they had ever been inclined to be fast, now was their chance.

The boys suddenly shot off to the right, giving the line a quick jerk.

The boys next then imparted the motion to the rest.

Then Tom and Ned dug their heels into the ice and around came the line just a-flying.

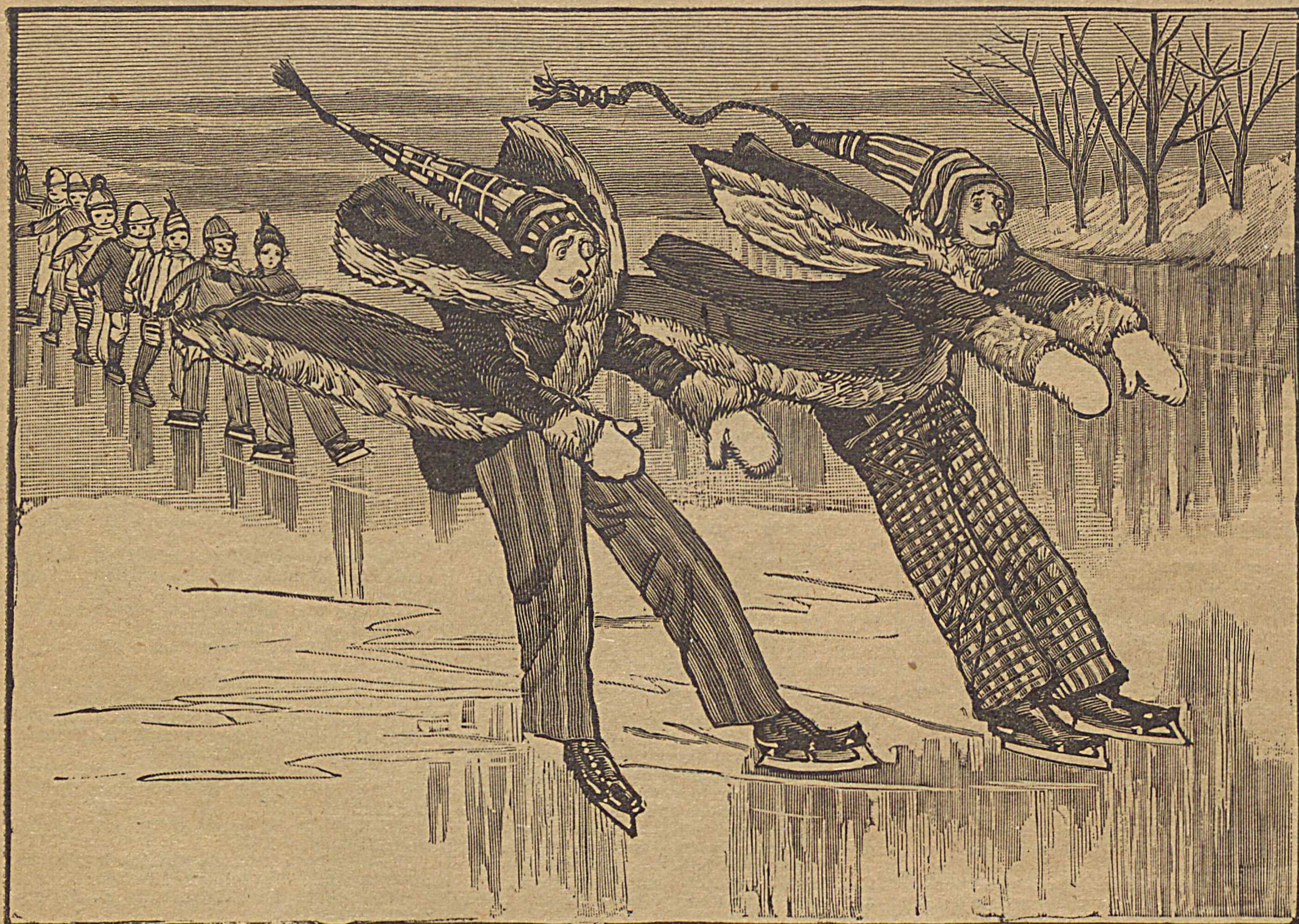
The two dudes suddenly found themselves snappees, when they had intended to be snappers.

There was no help for it now, however.

The other boys dragged them along, and they could not stop to save their necks.

Then came that quick jerk and the halt.

The two slims flew around, were snapped away from the rest of the gang and went scur-



Straight for the bank they went, and there was no more stopping them than if they had had wings. The bank was now not more than ten feet away. Tom and Ned and the rest had paused, and were now looking at the dudes.

That was just the kind the boys wanted, and they promised themselves great sport.

Tom and Ned were up to mischief, as usual.

They were thinking of what they should do to make things lively all the way to the river.

Hardly had they reached the scene of their intended jollity before the two dudes gave them the very snap they were looking for.

Chollie and Gussie wore long cape ulsters reaching to their heels, trimmed with cat's fur and making them look like two mummies from the Arctic regions.

They had white mittens of lamb's wool, the newest fad, and toboggan caps were drawn down over their ears and were quite the cheese, you know.

"Chollie, old chappie," said Gussie, as he was putting on his nickel-plated club skates, "let's snap the whip, don't ye know, with the deah boys on the other end."

"Pwime fun, old boy," giggled Chollie. "Those young fellahs aw always getting up snaps, baw Jove, and now we'll give 'em one."

"Awfully jolly, chappie. It just takes the cwacker, you know."

So it would have done, if Tom had not fortunately overheard the remark.

"Snap us, will they?" he observed. "Well, I opine not."

fellows, let's all join hands and go down the river all a-flying, with the wind at our backs."

They clasped hands, Chollie and Gussie on one end, and Tom and Ned on the other.

Seven or eight boys filled up the intervening space, and then they started.

How they did fly!

If a railroad train had been coming along at that moment, those jolly skaters would have shown it their heels.

Click, click, over the grassy surface they sped, the wind whistling about their ears and putting the roses into their cheeks.

How they did go it.

At first they kept in a straight line, across the river.

For an eighth of a mile they kept this up, and then they reached a bend in the river.

On one side there were snow-drifts eight or ten feet deep.

"Snap the whip!" yelled the two dudes at the top of their voices.

"Snap the whip it is!" cried Tom and Ned, as they quickened their pace.

How they did scoot!

Their footprints fairly scintillated as they dashed over the ice.

Those dudes went as they never went before.

rying toward the river bank like the wind.

The ice was like glass, the wind was blowing a gale, and they were now under full steam.

"Stop it, deah boy," howled Chollie.

He might as well have told the wind to desist.

The two let go hands, however, thinking that they could do better if they were alone.

What is that old saying about there being union in strength or the reverse.

Well, the dandies suddenly realized the truth of that trite remark.

How they did bowl along!

Straight for the bank they went, and there was no more stopping them than if they had had wings.

The bank was now not more than ten feet away.

Tom and Ned and the rest had paused, and were now looking at the dudes.

"Can't they skate, though?"

"Did you ever see such speed?"

"Let's put 'em up against the champions."

"They'll leave the best of 'em out of sight."

"If there wasn't anything in the way now, they'd keep right on to Albany."

If there wasn't anything in the way!

Yes, and that was the fun of it.

Well, what was there?



Oh, nothing much.  
Just a snow drift, ten feet deep.

## PART XV.

THE two deluded dudes went racing across the river in spite of themselves.

This did not look much like snapping the whip.

It was altogether too much snap as far as they were concerned.

The boys had got the butt of the aforesaid whip into their own hands.

The dudes had been snapped off and were now flying towards the river bank where there was a big snow drift ready to receive them.

Wallowing in snow drifts did not appear to have agreed with them.

They came up, head first, and facing each other, but three or four feet apart.

All you could see of them was their heads. The rest of them was buried under the snow.

"Ah, theah!" said Chollie.

"How do, chappie?" answered Gussie.

"How do you like it as fah as you've got, deah boy?"

"Fawst wate, but I'd like to go a bit fahthah, ye know."

"Has your mothah mawied again, deah boy?"

"No. What makes you ask that, old chappie?"

chappie," yelled Gussie. "I want to get out."

"Oh, you'd better stay and comfort your friend. He's going to stay there, and he will want company, of course."

"But I don't want to stay and comfort nobody. I'd wathah be at home, or in the staw."

"Oh, I guess you'll keep, even if you are pretty fresh. Cold is good for new goods, you know."

Then the boys began skating in plain sight of the dudes, but never once offering to help them.

Chollie and Gussie could see all the fun, and yet take no part therein.

Suddenly a bright idea entered their heads.



They came up, head first and facing each other, but three or four feet apart. All you could see of them was their heads. The rest of them was buried under the snow.

It did, for a fact.

There was a yell, two pairs of fluttering coat-tails were seen and then two dudes went flying, head first into the drift.

Then how the boys did howl.

"Sudden disappearance of two dudes—the latest scientific mystery," remarked Tom, with an expansive smile.

"Sudden fall in dry-goods," echoed Ned.

"Ulster overcoats gone clean out of sight!"

"Wasn't that a dandy snap?"

"We held up our end, eh, boys!"

"Did you ever see such skating?"

"Won't they feel tired when they come out!"

"The idea of trying to work a gag on us!"

"Why, we're the bosses at that sort of thing."

"We collar the cruller, dear boy."

"But I say?"

"Well, say it."

"Those dudes must have gone down to China."

"Oh, well, they'll come out again."

"Yes, but they may be smothered."

"No such luck. Only the good die young, my boy."

The two dudes were not dead by any means. They presently appeared a yard or so away from where they had gone into the drift.

They emerged right side up, but looking pretty well tired out.

"Why, if she isn't, you cahn't get a step fathah, baw Jove."

"Wats!" said Gussie, dropping back into the snow.

Then the boys came up and stood around.

"Find good winter quarters there, fellows?" asked Tom.

"Hope you enjoy it," said Ned, "for I don't see how you are going to get out."

"When the spring-time comes, gentle Chollie, you will probably thaw out."

"Make yourselves easy, boys. You've got the winter before you."

Chollie did not feel very much like resurrecting ancient jokes now.

Instead of that he got mad.

"Yaw a set of hawid, vulgah fellahs!" he cried, "and I don't want any maw to do with you."

"Come on, then, boys," said Tom. "Let them stay where they are."

Then the boys started off.

Gussie wasn't going to be so foolish as his chum.

"Hold on, chappies," he shouted. "Don't go away and leave me heah to fweeze."

"Stick your head under and you'll be all right," said Ned. "The Esquimaux sleep that way always. You'll find it decidedly comfortable, if you only keep your face covered."

"But I don't want to be a hawid Esquimaux,

They determined to get out.

Anybody but a dude would have thought of that long before.

"I say, Chollie, they've played a wacket on us," said Gussie.

"I weally believe they have, deah boy."

"Let's get out of the dwift without theiah assistance."

"A bwight ideah. You help me, and I'll help you."

Then floundering, tugging and hauling, the two slims emerged from the drift, and once more glided out upon the ice.

"Wondah if we couldn't pay 'em off faw this?" asked Chollie.

"Yas, but we'd bettah not twy any maw snapping the whip. That doesn't seem to pay, chappie, does it? Cahn't you think of some othah way?"

"I'll twy, deah boy. Don't let's [notice them at fawst."

So the dudes skated by themselves, and the boys did likewise.

"They're trying to think up some good snap to play on us, Tom."

"Yes, two heads are better than one."

"Not when both are blockheads, my son."

"Oh, yes they are. Two of a kind, you know."

"Never agree. I guess we are safe. Let's go and pretend it was all a mistake."



"You don't think they are such donkeys as to believe that, do you?"

"Oh, they'll believe anything."

The boys all skated down to where the dudes were, and Tom said, laughingly:

"Want to snap the whip again, fellows?"

"If the wind hadn't been blowing that way we'd have had you in the dwift, deah boy," answered Chollie.

"Yes, old chappie, we were just looking faw a nice place to send you," added Robinson, "but you wathah got the dwop on us, don't ye know. We'll fix you next time, chappies."

"Do you want to try it now?" asked Ned, with a Cheshire cat smile.

"Not now, chappie. You'll be on yaw gawd, don't ye know."

"It's getting kind o' late anyhow," put in Tom. "Let's have a race, all hands."

"We might as well let up on them for now," he remarked to Ned. "There's no use in working them to death. We'll have plenty more chances to play roots on 'em before we leave town."

The whole gang skated up and down until it began to grow dark, when they went back to town declaring that they hadn't had so much sport in a month.

During the next week the two boys found an opportunity to humbug the two slims again without the latter knowing anything about it.

It was a fine, bracing winter afternoon, and the two dudes were out for a walk in company.

They paused before a clothing store window to look at some giddy cravats which were displayed there, and were just carried away by the dizziness thereof.

"Vewy stylish, awn't they?"

"The vewy latest fashion, deah boy."

"I'd like awfully to have that gween one with the gold buttahflies on it."

"Yes, but the wed one with black wings is maw to my fancy."

"That's because yaw daww, me boy. I couldn't stand wed, ye know."

In front of the store, but on the other side of the door, were some overcoats upon which placards were hung, descriptive of their quality and cheapness.

While the dudes were admiring the ties and scarfs and shirts in the other window, along came Tom and Ned and took them in.

The slims were too much occupied to notice anything but the goods in the window.

Tom removed a sign from an ulster coat, and nodded toward young Smith.

Ned caught on in a jiffy.

He annexed another card, and the two young rascals softly approached the dudes.

By the aid of a couple of pins and a little dexterity the two placards were affixed to the backs of the absorbed dudes.

Then the boys sloped without having been detected.

Presently the two swells went on, one announcing that he was extremely stylish, and the other informing the crowd that he came cheap at fifteen dollars.

That's what the cards on their backs said, but it is doubtful if Gussie would have agreed with his, for he considered himself worth several times the figure mentioned.

Well, it wasn't long before folks began to get onto those dudes.

"Very stylish, eh?" said an old farmer. "Wall, if that sort o' thing is the style, I don't want none of it in mine, thank you."

"Cheap at fifteen cases," said a tough young man, looking at Gussie. "Well, if I was flush I might buy him fur fifteen cents, but I tink I'd look twiet at der rocks fust."

"H'm! walking advertisements, I guess," remarked a solid citizen. "Well, it gives the young fellows a chance to wear good clothes and doesn't call for any very great amount of brains. I should say they've struck a very good job."

"Well, well, what won't those two fools do to attract attention?" growled Griggs, who happened along just then. "My monkey is very stylish, and t'other idiot is cheap at fifteen dollars. I should call him dear at any price."

After a bit the dudes noticed that lots of people, as they went by, turned their heads and smiled, even laughed aloud in some cases.

"Evwybody seems to be in good spiwits today," remarked Chollie.

"Yas, so they do. Wondah what the joke is that they aw all laughing at?"

"Don't know, I'm shaw."

Pretty soon along came a lot of the academy boys, and caught on to the snap right away.

"Oh, I say, fellers, here's a go. Look at the thing they call stylish!"

"Guess it must have been left over from Christmas."

"Well, well, who wants to buy a jumping jack? Fifteen dollars is too high, I think, even if it can talk."

"And it smokes real cigars too, Hawwy. Just think of that."

"Yes, and it carries a latch-key. Isn't it giddy?"

"Yes, but I wouldn't give 'all that for it."

"Aw theah, chappies, does yaw mothah know yaw out?" cried one irreverent youth.

Then he plugged a snowball at the sign on Chollie's back.

He might have hit it if the slim had kept still.

Unluckily for himself, Chollie turned to reprove the hilaricus youths for their unseemly levity.

He turned just in time to catch that ice-cream drop right in the collar button.

"You hawid felah, I'll pay you faw that!" he cried, rushing at the youth with his cane upraised.

"No, thanks, I don't want any pay for it, you can have it for nothing," said the young rascal, jumping aside.

Gussie turned around and saw the card on Chollie's back.

Of course he had no idea that he himself had the honor of wearing a decoration as well as his friend.

"Ha, ha! 'Pon me wawd that's vewy funny," he chuckled. "No wondah the people all grinned. Wondah who put that on him?"

Of course he couldn't tell his chum about it, at least not just then.

Now, that he knew what the snap was, he wanted to enjoy it as well as others.

Then, when he saw that Smith was about to return, he pretended to be very busy, gazing in at a shop window.

That gave Chollie a chance to see what was on Gussie's back.

"Baw Jove, that's what the fellahs were all laughing at," he tittered. "Beastly funny joke. I won't say a wawd about it till we've gone a little fawther."

The boys had skipped by this time, and the two dudes went on.

Other people came along, though, and made audible remarks concerning the dudes.

Each thought that the other was meant, and both were on the broad grin.

"I'll tell him pwetty soon, when I've had a little maw fun out of it," thought Chollie, chuckling to himself.

"Bettah let the thing go a little fawthah," mused Gussie, "befaw I tell him about it. Nevah do to spoil spawt, you know."

So the two went on, each imagining that his chum was the only victim.

Presently along came the police department and saw the cards on the dudes' backs.

"Say," he said, catching up to the slims, and tapping them on the shoulders, "are you doing this for fun, or for an advertisement?"

"Doing what faw fun?" asked both.

"Carrying those signs on your backs. If it's for fun you've got to stop it, and if it's for an advertisement, where's your license?"

"I haven't any cawd on me back, deah boy."

Both made this avowal at once.

"Oh, you haven't, eh? Then what's this?"

Then the fellow removed the placards, and showed them to the dudes.

Then if they didn't look sick, I wouldn't say so.

"Oh, I thought it was on yaw back," said each, addressing the other.

"You're a couple of fools, both of you," snorted the police department. "Somebody has been making jackasses of you, and it was totally unnecessary."

"Sah!" cried both dudes.

"Move on, or I'll run you both in for drawing a crowd."

They moved.

The little snap produced a coolness between the chums for a time.

They didn't have a downright quarrel over the affair, but they did not speak as they passed by for as much as two whole days.

Tom and Ned had followed the procession and taken in the whole circus, even to the end.

"They wouldn't tumble if there was an earthquake," remarked Tom.

"Or a landslide," added Ned.

Shortly after this a big masquerade and fancy ball was given in the town hall to which everybody was invited.

The boys made up their minds to take it in

and were not long in finding out that the dudes were going, also.

What puzzled the dudes most was the choice of a costume, but this the boys settled for them.

"If I were you, I would go as a clown," said Tom to Chollie, and Ned said the same thing to Gussie. "No one will know you and you'll have lots of fun."

A costumer came up from the city and from him the two slims hired two suits exactly alike even to the masks, though neither knew what the other had taken.

Just before the ball Tom sent a note to an old maid in town, who was known to have been looking for a husband for at least twenty years, the note running thus:

"ADORED ONE,—I love you beyond expressior. Meet me at the ball to-night and we will fly. I shall dress as a clown with a big nose."

"ROMEO."

The note did the business.

The ancient maiden went to the ball in a yellow domino with red feathers in her hair, and a white half-mask over her wrinkled visage.

Tom and Ned were dressed like a couple of harlequins, and looked exactly alike.

They got onto the two clowns pretty soon, and were able to recognize them from half a dozen others of the same variety by means of their big, false noses.

Chollie was sitting on a bench in a far-away corner, when a gorgeous red and yellow creature roused before him, sat on the same bench, sidled up to him and exclaimed:

"Romeo, I am yours! We will fly to-night."

"Baw Jove! she must be a bird, and a pwetty old one, too. I don't want to wun away with me gwandmothah."

"Yes, we will fly to-night," said the old woman, edging up to Chollie.

"Wight you aw, and I pwopose to fly at once," muttered Chollie, as he got up and dusted.

The angel in red and yellow pursued him, but lost him in the crowd.

Pretty soon, however, she espied Gussie, who had not seen Chollie yet, taking a drink of water at a table in the ante-room.

"Romeo, my sweet one, why do you fly from me?" she asked, grabbing the dude by the arm.

There was a great sputtering and choking, and then, when Gussie had got his breath, he asked:

"Beg pahdan, did I hawt yaw dwess? What say?"

"I've caught my little birdie, and now we will fly," said the old hen, tapping the clown's nose playfully with her fan.

"Wheah shall we fly?" asked Gussie.

"He, he, he—you know—he, he. You've got the ring, of course?"

"Wing? Of course not. What do you want of a wing? Is theah going to be a fight?"

"A fight? With my dear tootsey-wootsey, my own Romey-nomey? Of course not. Doesn't it love its lovey-dovey any more?"

"'Pon me wawd, I believe the howid old woman is making love to me," gasped Gussie, and then he too dusted.

Then the fun began.

Tom had tumbled to the old maid and found out how she was dressed.

He and Ned straightway procured red and yellow dominoes, and got a couple of girls they knew to put them on.

The poor dudes knew no rest.

No sooner had they finished a dance before a gorgeous red and yellow figure would sidle up to them and whisper soft nothings in their ears.

Sometimes it was the old gal herself, but oftener it was a rot, and the dudes went nearly crazy.

The ancient maiden had just as much of a circus as did the dudes.

She had discovered that there were seven or eight clowns in the room, though they did not all have big noses.

Then she proceeded to make it pleasant for each and all of them in turn.

She was bound to catch on to a husband, and, as it was leap year, she might never have another such a chance.

It grew very tiresome for the clowns, and they one by one moped and changed their costumes.

Chollie and Gussie retained theirs, however, and now their trials increased.

That red and yellow old maid seemed ubiquitous.

First they met her in the ball-room, then in the hall, then the supper room, after that in



the cloak room, subsequently in the gallery, and finally in the ball-room again.

The place was so crowded that neither of the dudes met each other, or more than one of the red and yellow women at once.

Finally the real article captured Chollie in the ante-room and said:

"Why do you run away from me? Don't you love me? Didn't you say you would dress up as a clown with a big nose and elope with me to-night?"

"No, I did not!" gasped the poor dude, as he flew out of the room.

The next minute Gussie entered the place, trying to get away from his pursuer.

To his surprise he ran right into her arms.

"He, he, he! so you have returned," she giggled. "Now you will fly with me, as you said you would, won't you?"

Then Gussie tumbled, or at least he thought he did.

He had seen the other clown as he ran out, and recognized at once that the man's costume and big nose were identical with his own.

"I've been taken for somebody else," he muttered, "and now I'll find out who he is, aw pawish in the attempt."

Chollie happened to be animated by the same idea at that very moment.

He too had seen that Gussie was dressed as he had been.

"It's that fellah that has made me all this twouble," he remarked. "I'll just go and see who he is."

He was further induced to return by seeing a red and yellow domino approaching from the ball-room.

He rushed into the ante-room just as Gussie was about to rush out.

They met with a crash.

Then each made a grab at the other's mask.

Both came off at the same instant, and the two dudes stood revealed.

Two red and yellow dominoes and two harlequins came in at that moment.

"Well, baw Jove!"

"Upon me wawd!"

The humbugged old maid now saw the faces of her admirers.

"Ha!" she sputtered, "I wouldn't have either of you if I never get married. You're a couple of born idiots!"

Tableau!

## PART XVI.

THE adventure of Chollie and Gussie, habited as clowns, with the old maid in the red and yellow domino, was told all over town before another day had passed.

When the ancient maiden had told them that she wouldn't marry either of them because they were a couple of idiots, it filled their cup of sorrow to the brim.

In the first place, it was bad enough to think that they would want to marry such an old shrew.

To be told by her, however, that she would not have either, or both, as a gift was worse and more of it.

When they heard that, and when a lot of other people heard it also, the poor dudes were indeed saddened.

The way they waltzed out of that ball-room was a caution to slow pokes.

They had had all the dancing and a good deal more in the bargain, that they wanted for one time.

Away they hurried to the cloak room as mad and as sad as ever they were in their lives.

"Chollie, old chappie," said Gussie, "somebody has been playing an awful mean wacket on us."

"Gussie, deah boy," retorted Chollie, "I nevah saw anything so hawid."

Then they hustled into their ulster coats, put on their dicers, and hid themselves away.

Tom and Ned stayed the thing out and had lots of fun, even if the dudes had departed.

The sun was just poking his ruddy face out from a bank of clouds when they turned into their little beds, tired out, but happy in the consciousness of having had more fun than had fallen to their lot in a month previous.

The dudes mutually agreed that somebody had played a snap on them, and the next thing was to determine who that somebody was.

Had they remained enemies, this would have been impossible, as then they never spoke except to abuse one another.

Now that they were chums, however, they could put their noddles contiguous, consult and sift the thing to the bottom.

"Chollie, old chappie," said Robinson to

Smith, the next day, "how did you come to go to the masquerade dressed as a clown don't ye know?"

"Tom Twust suggested it, old fellah, when I asked him what a coshume I shoud weah."

"Ned New pwoposed the same thing to me, old chappie."

"You don't say?"

"Yas, and do you know, chappie, I've got an idea?"

"Weally now, have you?"

"Yas, I believe that those two young wascals aw the closest chums, and that they've been putting up no end of jobs on us, old chappie."

"Baw Jove! if I could prove it I'd nevah speak to the fellah again."

"Naw I, eithah. Let's cut 'em dead, me boy."

"So we will."

When next the boys met the dudes the latter passed them with a stony stare, a regular we-never-speak-as-we-pass-by sort of a look, holding their heads higher than ever before.

"Ned," said Tom, "the slims have tumbled!"

"I believe they have, my son."

"And they won't notice us."

"So it seems."

"But that isn't going to interfere with business, is it?"

"Bet your life it isn't."

"We'll have just as much fun as before?"

"To be course."

And so they did, and the dudes did not always tumble, either.

One afternoon, shortly subsequent to this, there was a light fall of snow which the academy boys took full advantage of.

They made a long slide on the walk right in front of the drug store and had lots of fun keeping the pot boiling as they called it.

The slide was as smooth as glass and extended twenty or thirty feet, ending in the gutter.

"Keep her agoing, boys," cried Tom, as he rushed to the starting point and started for the other end again.

Behind him came Tom, Joe Brown, Jim Green, Johnny Black, Billy White and half a dozen more.

So they kept it up until, being in a regular glow, Tom suggested some other kind of fun.

"Let the snow settle on it, fellows," he said, "and then we'll see larks."

The boys helped matters along by throwing snow on the slide until it was covered.

Just then along came the Widdy Mulligan, the wash lady, with a brimming pailful of hot water in her hand.

Her own fire was low, and she had borrowed some hot water from the grocery store.

Along she came, heedless of danger, until her foot struck that slide, when—

Well, great was the fall thereof, that's all.

Down she went on her bustle with a yell, and away went the water as though a hydrant had busted.

Most of it struck the little stoop in front of the drug store, but a good deal of it ran across the walk into the gutter.

"Oh!" yelled the boys.

The Widdy Mulligan sat there for a few moments trying to catch her breath.

"Oho, me back is broke and it's spacheless I am wid froight," she exclaimed. "The wather is all spilt an' the Dootehman won't give me no more. Help me up, wan av yez."

The whole gang rushed to the widdy's assistance.

She was helped up so suddenly that she lost her balance again and sat down in the pail.

"Hould on, hould on, don't be so anxious," she howled, trying to cuff Johnny Black's ears. "Sure, I didn't tell ye to blow me up wid gunpowdher, but on'y to hilt me up aisy."

The water had by this time frozen on the walk and on the stoop so that there was a nice little pitfall awaiting whomsoever came along first.

This happened to be Chollie Smith.

In the meantime the boys had assisted the Widdy Mulligan to get up.

Then one of them ran off to get her another pailful of hot water for laundry purposes.

The next arrival was Chollie.

He was going to call on his chum and propose a little racket for the evening.

He only got as far as the steps.

Away he went on his back and slid clear across the walk.

Gussie heard the shout raised by the boys, and ran out to drive them off.

When he reached the step he sat down and slid off on to the walk.

"My gwacious! Ain't it slippewy?"

"You ought to keep yaw step clean, deah boy," said Chollie. "I most bwroke my neck."

"And I think I must have dislocated my collar button."

"Yaw collar bone, you mean."

"Well, it's all the same."

"No, it ain't."

"Well, it feels the same, anyhow."

At that both dudes started to get up.

Then there was a series of wild gyrations as though they were doing a war dance, or the can-can, and down they went again.

"Awful icy, ain't it, deah boy?"

"Hawid."

"You ought to put ashes on the walk."

"I don't see why it's so slippewy just heah when it isn't so anyweah else."

"It's vewy strange."

This time they got up more carefully and managed to reach the store without mishap.

Then Gussie came out with a pan of ashes to throw over the walk.

He forgot all about the old maxim which declares that he who spits to the wind spits in his own face.

He gave that pan of ashes a toss right in the face of the wind, and the next moment he looked like a miller.

"Oh, deah! I didn't know the wind was blowing this way," he remarked in disgust.

Then he went in, and the ice still remained on the walk.

Along came Pompey Snowdrop, the white-washer.

Fortunately he did not carry his usual pail of wash with him.

Fortunately, because he sat down on that walk so suddenly that he bit the end of his tongue and nearly split the boards.

"Whoa! wha' de mattah?" he yelled.

"Drop something, Pomp?" asked Tom.

"Come over here and I'll help you up," said Ned.

"G'way dar, yo'm bad boys, yo' make me fall down. Ain't fell afo' dis wintah."

"You fell behind not before, this time, Pomp."

"Wull, I ain't fell no ways befo' dis. Yo' boys all de time puttin' up jobs on somebody."

"Let's see you slide, Pomp."

"Don' wanter; got 'nuff ter do wifout foolin' my time away wif yo' boys."

Then he got upon his feet and was starting off when something else happened.

It was all the fault of that dude, Gussie Robinson.

He was bound to put ashes on that walk or perish.

Out he came with another handful, some of 'em red hot.

He went with a rush so that they would not blow all over him as before.

What was the result?

"Well, he was so fly that he slipped on the edge of the platform again, and the pan flew right out of his hands."

He sat down and Pomp caught the pan of ashes right in the neck.

A hot coal touched that coon's skin and then there was war.

"Wow! wha' dat? Hi-hi, take him off! Sumfin bitin' me like de deuce. Whoa!"

The coon jumped and yelled and executed a fandango in a highly original style of his own, ending up by coming down upon the walk all in a heap.

He was covered with ashes from his top-knot to his heels and looked as much like a Chinaman as a ducky, with that sort of complexion.

Gussie got up and made tracks, for he had had several experiences with that moke and did not want any more.

The boys just howled and roared and shrieked when they beheld the downfall of Africa.

"Haven't had so much fun in six years!"

"If he catches that dude he'll warm his jacket for him."

"Haven't spoiled our slide yet, and we'll have more fun with it."

Pompey got up, the coal having ceased to burn him, picked up and put on his hat, brushed himself, looked around and observed:

"Somebody's gwine ter get smashed in de jaw when I hab time to 'tend to deir case, an' I reckon dey knows who I mean."

Then he took himself off, and met with no further mishaps.

Gussie had given up trying to cover up the ice, and resolved to make no more attempts.

The ashes had covered a portion of it, but there were still a few treacherous places left under the thin coating of snow.



"Let's see who will be the next victim," said Tom.

It was Griggs, returning to the office. Chollie ought to have been back by this time, but he wasn't.

The lawyer stepped on a slippery place, and went down like a load of brick.

Just then along came old Bolus and saw the whole show.

"He, he, the wicked walk in slippery places, Lawyer Griggs," he remarked, as he walked up the steps and opened his door.

"I see they do," retorted Griggs, "but I can't, I fall down. That's one on you, Bolus."

"H'm! not bad for you," grunted Bolus, and then fearing that Griggs might sue him,

"Well, you both told us to weah the same dwess."

"Oh, that was only to have more fun. We wore the same suits ourselves."

"And it wasn't a job?"

"How can you think so, old man?"

That wasn't exactly answering the question, but the dudes were satisfied.

In fact, they did not care to dwell too long upon the subject, as it only made them out bigger fools.

"I couldn't think what made you treat us so coldly," continued the veracious Tom.

"Same here," put in Ned, "and so we thought we ought to have the thing explained."

"Oh, of cawse."

"Of course. Her sister is too young to take out."

"Guess you must be mistaken, me deah fellah."

"Well, she is; she's only ten."

"Oh, I don't mean that, ye know."

"What am I mistaken about, then?"

"About Gussie Wobinson going to take haw out sleighing."

"Oh, no, I'm sure of it. He told me so himself."

"But I'm going to take haw out meself, deah boy."

"You are?"

"Of cawse. I've made awwagements, me deah fellah."

"With the young lady?"



Faster and still faster they went, and yet neither could get ahead. Presently the two cutters neared the avenue down which they were to turn. There was fun ahead now, and no error.

he made Gussie clear all the ice and snow off, and the boys' fun was over.

Of course Tom and Ned could have fun with the dudes even if they were not friends with the latter, but they concluded that they could have more if they were more intimate.

One day the boys came face to face with the dudes on the main street.

Chollie and Gussie were going to pass right along, but Tom would not have it.

He and Tom blocked the way, while he said:

"Hallo, fellows, what's the matter with you? Why can't we be friends?"

"Because yaw always putting up jobs on us, don't ye know," said Gussie.

"Yas, baw Jove, all the time," added Chollie.

"What an idea!" said Tom.

"How absurd," observed Ned.

"Didn't you tell that old maid to wun aftah us at the ball the othah night?" asked Gussie.

"Of course not. How ridiculous!"

"Didn't you, 'pon yaw wawd?"

"No," said both boys at once.

That was true enough, as far as it went. They hadn't told the ancient maiden to pester the slims.

They had caused her to do it, all the same, which was different.

"Come and have some hot soda," said Tom.

"It's my treat."

"Thanks awfully, deah boy."

Maybe it was the hot drink which made Tom and Ned wink at each other, and maybe it was something else.

However, the dudes were pacified, and that was sufficient.

Not very long after the make-up Tom got on to Chollie's plans in regard to taking a certain young lady out sleigh-riding, and communicated the fact to Ned.

"We'll have some fun out of that," said Tom.

"Bet yer boots!" said Ned. "You work Chollie, and I'll fix Gus all right."

At ncon Tom saw Chollie, and said carelessly:

"Nice weather for sleighing, isn't it?"

"Fawst clawss, deah boy."

"You ought to take your daisy out for a ride, old man."

"Yas, I was thinking about it."

"Oh, by the way, Robinson is going out with Miss Redtop this aft."

"Gussie Wobinson?"

"Ha-ha."

"With Miss Wedtop?"

"Cert."

"Miss Lizzie Wedtop?"

"To be shaw. I'm to call at faw o'clock."

"Well, you'll have to look out then, for I know that Gussie intends to take her out."

"Ha, we'll see about that, deah boy."

Ned in the meantime, had seen Gussie, and had told him that Chollie was thinking of asking Miss Lizzie to go out sleighing with him.

"However," he continued, "I don't know that she knows anything about it, and if you want to get off a good joke on Smith, here's your chance."

"How's that, chappie?"

"Go and take her out yourself and get ahead of him."

"Ha, that would be a wegulah lahk, don't ye know."

"Of course. He's going to call at four o'clock, but if you get a cutter and go around half an hour before you'll cheat him out of his girl."

"I'll do it, chapple, 'pon me wawd I will. Won't it be spawt?"

"Great larks, old man."

There were two livery stables in town, and both were patronized that afternoon by our dudes.

Chollie went to Swift's and got a cutter, while Gussie went to Norton's and got the same sort of a rig out.

Chollie went earlier than he had intended



so as to be sure and not let Gussie cut him out.

The two stables were situated on a side street, one north and the other south of the main street.

At half-past three or thereabouts two cutters turned into Main street, and sped away toward Hunterdon avenue, a mile distant.

In the cutters were the two dudes.

They both tumbled to the other's presence at the same time.

Then there was a hustling.

"Go on!" yelled Chollie, cracking his nag over the flank with the whip.

He wasn't going to let that Robinson chap get ahead of him if he knew it.

"Get up!" hissed Gussie, slapping the reins on his pacer's back.

He had started out with the intention of cutting out Chollie, and he was bound to do it.

Both horses dashed ahead, and the dudes strained every nerve to get the lead.

There was a good open road, hard and smooth before them, with nothing in the way.

How those nags did go it!

Neck and neck, and each going like the wind.

The dudes were yelling and keeping a tight hold on the lines, for the horses were running away with them.

They were both determined to get there first, at any cost.

School was out and a swarm of boys came rushing down the street.

They caught on to the race in a second.

"Let's make 'em go faster, boys!"

"Give 'em something to remember."

"Two to one you can't knock their hats off."

"I'll take you up!"

"Let 'em have it, boys!"

How the snowballs did fly about!

Chollie got one in the back of the neck that made him dream of the North Pole.

Gussie caught one in the ear, and as he turned to see who had been so bold, the other ear was treated to the same sort of thing.

The air was thick with the flying missiles.

The sleighs were peppered, the horses got two or three cracks, and the dudes were pasted all over.

They didn't let that stop them, however.

It was a race for a mash and neither wanted to lose.

The horses fairly flew, the dudes shouting to them to go still faster.

Men came out to watch the race, the boys pursued the sleighs, sending volleys of snow-

balls after them, and there was lots of excitement.

The cutters were just abreast, and neither could seem to get ahead of the other.

The dudes were glaring at each other in a style that meant war to the knife, and the knife plumb up to the notch in the victim's gullet.

Faster and still faster they went, and yet neither could get ahead.

Talk about a race between the favorites with thousands on the result!

That was tame enough compared to this contest.

Presently the two cutters neared the avenue down which they were to turn.

There was fun ahead now, and no error.

## PART XVII.

THE race was not over yet, if the avenue was just ahead, and both dudes plied the whip vigorously.

Whoever got around the corner first would win the prize.

Of course both Chollie and Gussie wanted to be the one to do it.

Now, turning a corner in a sleigh going like the wind is no slouch of a job, even when one has plenty of room to do it in.

Neither of those dudes could be considered a model driver at the best of times.

Considering the excitement and all, it would not be surprising if they failed to pan out well at such a time.

Both tried to turn the corner at the same time, and both turned too sharply.

The result was disastrous.

The two sleighs came together with the force of two express trains in collision.

Just what happened after that neither dude could tell with any degree of certainty.

Something was upset, at all events.

It was easier to tell the result than to describe how it came about.

The result was two smashed up sleighs, two runaway horses, a pile of robes, et cetera, one dude in a ditch and another in a tree.

Chollie found himself in a muddy, slushy ditch at the roadside nearly up to his neck, while Gussie suddenly discovered that he was hanging by his embroidered suspenders to the stump of a limb on a small tree six feet away from the scene of the collision.

The horses were flying up the avenue as fast as they could go, and still keeping up the race.

The two cutters were represented by a pile of kindling wood, a lot of old junk and a few bits of busted harness.

"Faw hevvin's sake, how did I get up heah? Take me down, somebody," was Gussie's plaintive wail.

"I shall be dwozned and fwozen solid! Help me out!" yelled Chollie.

Now it so happened that Gussie was hanging nearly over Chollie's head.

At any rate, when Chollie shifted his position in his endeavor to get out he was right under where Gussie was hanging.

Snap!

The stump of a limb broke, and down came Gussie astride of Chollie's neck, his long legs sticking out, one on either side.

The sudden shock caused Chollie to lose his footing and go under.

Gussie went flying from his perch on Chollie's shoulders, taking a header and landing in the ditch ten feet away.

Of course it was never his luck to fall on the solid ground.

By this time people began to arrive from all directions.

"Here, here! You can't go in swimming in the public street," cried one of the town constables. "Come out of that!"

"That's what we're twying to do, you old fool," snarled Chollie.

"H'm, don't you call me a fool," snarled the other. "I'll run you in for two cents."

"Saved!" cried Tom Trust, as Chollie crawled out upon solid ground, and began to shiver and shake.

"Out of the jars of death," muttered Ned, when Gussie followed, a moment later.

"Here, here, you fellows can't stand in the cold all wet like this," cried Tom. "You'll catch your deaths. Run 'em home, boys!"

Tom and half a dozen others grabbed Chollie, while Ned and as many more of his chums seized Gussie.

Then they proceeded to run those dudes home, to keep them from freezing.

It would be safe to say that neither Chollie nor Gussie had ever indulged in such violent exercise before.

They had to fairly run their legs off, or else be dragged along the road.

"Hold up! Yaw've gone apast my stweet!" howled Chollie.

"No, we won't go by it," said Tom, increasing his speed.

It was a race to see which crowd could go fastest, but they both kept neck and neck.

"Stop, stop, I don't live way down heah!" panted Gussie.

The boys never heard him, or at least they did not seem to, for they kept right on.

At last, when they had reached the outskirts of the town, they wheeled around and raced toward the other end as fast as they could go.

The dudes had to keep up, but they were so fagged out that they could not tell whether they were walking or riding.

"Faw gwacious sake, stop!" gasped Gussie. "I shawn't catch cold now, I know. I'm wed hot."

"Just the worst time of any to stop," said Ned. "You must get cooled off," and around he wheeled and set off in another direction.

However, when the boys themselves got tired they stopped, and the dudes found themselves in front of their places of business.

Chollie went in to the office and kept the stove warm, while Gussie waltzed into the store, sat down over the register and proceeded to cool off.

The horses found their way back to their respective stables, and the robes and whips were returned, but the two sleighs were not worth the price of old iron. The livery men threatened to sue those dudes, but they never did.

Swift got five dollars out of Chollie and Gussie levied on the petty cash to the same extent to satisfy Norton, and that was all the case ever amounted to.

Those wise livery men had given a couple of dilapidated old arks to the dudes, knowing better than to intrust anything good to their care.

That was how the things came to go to pieces so easily.

The stablemen were paid liberally, but the dudes thought they had got off mighty cheap and were in fear and trembling for a month, imagining that they would have to go to prison or give up all the money they could earn for three years to pay for those sleighs.

All this time, of course, our two boys were not idle while there was any fun to be got out of the dudes.

Just about now the young fellows of the town got the toboggan craze very bad and a club was formed for the purpose of indulging in the rare sport of sliding down hill *a la Canadienne*.

Tom and Ned and a lot of the academy boys belonged, and at last the two dudes thought that they might as well join.

Some of the fellows did not want them, but Tom and Ned saw lots of fun in having them in and their votes settled it.

Of course our dudish friends must have the most gorgeous suits that could be bought, not being satisfied with the ordinary rose or striped blanket stuff used in making up these garments.

Chollie had his made from a red blanket with a black dotted border, while Gussie's was blue with red and yellow trimmings, the tuques, stockings and sashes being made to match.

Each had a small toboggan of his own, holding two persons, for they were exclusive ducks and could not think of going on the large ones owned by the club.

They made their first appearance on the slide one bright, frosty, moonlight night, the hill being further illuminated by naphtha torches stuck in the snow at regular intervals upon either side of the slope.

When they came up there was a shout of joy from all the sliders, male, female, old and young.

Tom and Ned were about to run a race on separate slides, each having a load of girls to pilot.

"Don't you two fellows want to race?" asked Tom.

"Yes, deah boy, aftah you go down."

"No, I mean for you to take these two toboggans."

"Oh, but we've got ouah own, don't ye know?"

"Of course, but you're just the fellows to take a crowd down, because you have more experience."

"Ah, yas; well, we might twy it once, deah boy."

"If that Smith fellow steers this toboggan, I won't go on it, *that's* certain," snapped Frankie Freshett. "I'm going to get off this minute."

"And I won't go down if Gussie Robinson steers," cried Clara Megilp, one of the professional beauties of the place.

"He'll be sure to break all our necks," remarked Miss Henrietta Grograin very emphatically.

"How many necks have you?" asked Tom with a chuckle.

"Only one, of course, but I don't want that broken, I guess."

In fact, there seemed to be a decided objection on the part of the young ladies to being steered down the hill by either of the dudes.

That made the latter very mad.

They had not been anxious to carry the crowd down, but now they were determined to do so.

"I guess I know as much about toboggans as the next fellah," declared Chollie.

As the next fellow was Gussie, the remark was emphatically true.

Neither of them knew any more about it than the law allowed.

"Of course you do," ejaculated Tom. "Go ahead, girls; what are you scared of?"

"I won't do it, so there!"

"I wouldn't go down if he paid me a thousand dollars."

"I don't want *my* neck broke, I tell you."

"We say broken in our school," chuckled Tom.

"Well, I don't want it broke or broken, either, so there!"

"Let her go, Tom," cried Ned. "We'll go ourselves."

"All right."

Instead of going down, however, the boys gave the wink to the dudes to exchange places with them at the last moment.

Consequently Chollie steered one toboggan and Gussie conducted the other in the great race.



The girls screamed, as a matter of course, in going over the jumps, but they couldn't get off, and had to stand it.

They were safe enough while on the slides, as there was no way of getting off, but when they struck the level the fun began.

All the dudes had to do when on the track was to stick out their right feet behind, and hold on; but when they left the incline and struck the even snow, they thought they must put on frills.

They tried to indulge in some fancy steering, and of course got badly left.

The result was that Chollie got upset in a snow bank, and Gussie ran into him, spilling his cargo out upon the snow.

Then there was a howling, and no mistake.

It was a dandy.

Chollie lost control of his steed when half way down, and turned stern on, finishing up in a ditch at the bottom.

Gussie slipped off of his vehicle, and went sliding down on his stomach, now and then polishing the end of his nose on the slippery slide.

He brought up at last in a snowdrift, and went in head first, up to his heels, having to be extricated by Tom and Ned.

"I don't think I fahney this sawt of spawt," he drawled, as he pulled his hood up over his head and left the grounds.

"You aren't going, too, are you, Chollie?" asked Tom, when he and Ned had pulled the other dude out of the ditch.

At the foot of the slope he picked himself up, grabbed the line and went on.

When he came to another hill he thought he might just as well ride as not.

He sat down, with his feet under the hood of the toboggan, seized the reins and let her go.

It was all right till he got to the bottom.

Then he ran into a lamp-post and got a great shaking up.

He flew out of his seat, straddled the post, and stood on his head, the toboggan turning upside down.

When he got disentangled from the lamp-post he was not certain whether he had any breath left or not, but concluded to try and



Chollie found himself in a muddy, slushy ditch at the roadside nearly up to his neck, while Gussie suddenly discovered that he was hanging by his embroidered suspenders to the stump of a limb on a small tree six feet away from the scene of the collision.

The girls picked themselves up, madder than hops, and began to abuse the boys.

Then they suddenly discovered that their pilots were the two dudes.

"I declare it's too mean and I won't speak to Tom Trust ever again so there I won't never!" sputtered Miss Grograin, with never a single punctuation mark in the whole speech.

"It's the meanest thing I ever heard of in all my life and I won't come on this hill ever again so long as these mean fellows are here!" snorted Frankie.

"Beg pahdon, ladies, I twust yaw not hawt," said Chollie, digging the snow out of his ear.

"It's no fault of yours if we ain't!" retorted one of the girls.

"You don't know any more about steering than a cow!" was the forcible but inelegant remark of another.

The dudes dragged the toboggans back to the top of the hill, feeling very, very sad.

Those on top howled with delight at the discomfiture of the others, and asked them to do it over again.

The girls got over their mad in a little while, and those who had been most indignant were now the most anxious to go down.

The dudes took their own toboggans and decided to have a race all by themselves.

"Yas, I guess so. I haven't had pwactice enough with these things, and I guess that's twial enough for once, me deah fellah."

"Then lend me your toboggan, old man. I'll bring it back all right."

"Certainly, deah boy," answered the dude, with great alacritty, being glad enough to get the thing off his hands.

Gussie concluded to drag his toboggan home, but if he had known as much before as he did afterwards he would have smashed the thing into kindlings first.

When he was on level ground it was all hunk, but when he had to go down any declivity, no matter how slight, then there was the deuce to pay.

The first street he struck after getting into town, went down hill.

The toboggan evinced a desire to go faster than its conductor, and bumped against his heels.

He got out of the way, and then the thing turned around and went down backward.

It went faster than Gussie cared to go, and he slipped up.

If he had fallen on the thing it would have been all right.

He struck the icy walk, however, and slid after his carriage.

get the rest of the way without any assistance.

First that confounded toboggan would bump against his heels, then it would swing around and go backward, after which it would put a post or a tree between itself and him, and nearly yank his hand off.

"I'm blowed if it wouldn't be bettah to caw it," thought the dude, after numerous mishaps.

He stuck it under his right arm, and sailed along, feeling that at last he had done the proper thing.

The first thing he knew he ran the thing into a tree-box, and was knocked silly.

Then, in turning a corner, he collided with a solitary pedestrian, who used some very warm language, consequent upon having that thing suddenly poked into his ribs.

"Put it on your head, you fool," he sputtered. "Can't you see anything?"

Gussie concluded not to take this advice, but went on, dragging the nuisance after him as before.

He tripped up three old women and a Dutchman, besides barking his own heels a number of times, to say nothing of numerous falls; but at last he got home to his hash-house, left the toboggan out behind the wood-



shed and went indoors, tired out, and utterly disgusted.

"If somebody comes along and steals the hawid thing I shawn't care a bit," he muttered, "and if evah I twy to wide it again I'm a biggah fool than I think I am."

He never appeared on the slide again, and his giddy suit was returned to the store to be sold second hand to some other idiot.

Chollie had gotten his fill of tobogganing, and his blankets were ripped up and helped to make his bed more comfortable for the rest of the winter.

Two or three weeks after Gussie's experience with a toboggan a female burlesque troupe struck the town, playing in the local opera house for three nights.

Gussie went to see them the first night, and his doom was sealed.

He fell madly, desperately in love with a daisy in blue tights, cutaway coat and cocked hat, and could dream of nothing else.

He attended the show every night, and at the matinee on Saturday hung around the back door and followed his divinity to the hotel after each performance.

He sent her big bouquets of roses, and they did not cost any trifle, either, at that season, wrote her little notes, and hung around her like a veritable shadow.

He finally secured an interview with the charming creature, and told her of his undying love and his frantic desire to go upon the stage, so as always to be near her.

"That'll do, sonny," said the lady, at length. "I don't want to adopt an infant, as I have

plenty of my own, and I don't think you have brains enough to be even a super."

"What?" gasped poor Gussie, you ain't mawied?"

"Yes, sir, very much married. My manager is my husband and we have four children."

"It's weal ewel," wailed the dude. "You took my flowers and the lettahs, and now you thwow me ovah."

"The flowers I gave to the chorus girls who had none thrown to them, the notes went into the fire."

"Ah! then you did not show them to your husband?" he asked, with a sigh of relief.

"Of course not. I wouldn't be so foolish, or so mean, either," was the answer.

"I shawn't be happy in this town atlan you have gone," sighed Gussie. "I am sick of the hawid old dwug staw. Can't you get me a place with the show?"

"No, my silly boy, and you had better stay in your store and try to be somebody."

Poor Gussie was crushed, however, and would take no advice.

He saw the manager of the show himself early Monday morning, and succeeded in obtaining a job as ticket-taker and bill distributor, the man who had filled this position having just been bounced for intoxication.

When the show left town the dude went with it, and his old acquaintances saw him no more.

After Gussie's departure, Chollie was fired with the ambition to be something better than a country lawyer's clerk, although he didn't

[THE END.]

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